

THE ARGOSY.

MARCH, 1878.

POMEROY ABBEY.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE STORM.

IT was the first day of June; looking at the weather, it might have been pronounced November; rarely, indeed, has June seen such a day as that. But, if the weather was bad, the inhabitants of Abbeyland were unusually active and gay; all, their best attire donned, making the most of their holiday. Windows and casements seemed alive with heads; groups gathered under shelter in doorways, in the shops, and in the blacksmith's forge, all watching the road in a flutter of expectation, for Guy, Lord of Pomeroy was to pass with his bride.

Twice already had the gazers been gratified. Once when the string of carriages, containing the bride and her friends, had gone forth to the chapel attached to Pomeroy Abbey; and again at the conclusion of the ceremony, when they went back to the White House to breakfast, the bride then sitting by her lord in his new and handsome chariot. A chariot emblazoned with the old arms and quarterings of the Pomeroy, and drawn by four greys, splendidly caparisoned. A goodly sight, indeed: but what a day!

Fair and calm and lovely had the weather been throughout the past month, and when the people of Abbeyland went to rest the previous evening it had appeared as settled as fair. In the morning when they rose, the sky was of a dark lead colour, gloomy and threatening clouds overspread the earth like a pall, and a sighing wind swept along in mournful wails, now dropping to a low dirge, now meeting, as it seemed, from all quarters, and battling in fury. No rain fell as

yet, no lightning came to terrify the timid, no thunder to appal them : but if ever the elements were gathering for sure warfare, they were that morning. And in this threatening weather the bride and her train went forth to the chapel at mid-day.

A bride bright and beautiful was she : and so she looked as she stood before the array of priests in her chaplet of white roses and orange-blossoms, the veil thrown back from her face, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed to brilliancy. All signs of happiness, quoth the company around, arrayed in their feathers and their laces : they little suspected that it was but the flush of excitement, of misery if you will ; or that she had disliked the Lord of Pomeroy, while she passionately loved another.

How fortunate Alice Wylde was, they deemed, to have gained that prize in the matrimonial lottery for which many had striven ! And she, flighty, vain, ill-trained, worse-disciplined, disappointed in him whom she had loved, had thought she could not do better than hasten to be somebody else's wife, if only to be revenged on the false lover : and when that somebody chanced to be the Lord of Pomeroy, to be raised to whose position she might have counted the world well lost, Alice Wylde had not hesitated. Some right-minded girls might have shrunk from the indelicacy of marrying one brother when they had loved the other. Not so Alice Wylde. To be Lady of Pomeroy she would have sacrificed more than any trifling reluctance that might haunt her of that kind.

And there she knelt in the chapel by the bridegroom's side, promising to be to him ever a loving and faithful wife. The sisters, Isabel, the wife of the Honourable Mr. Capel, and Joan Pomeroy, stood near her ; Joan smartly attired for once. Next to them was the bride's mother, resplendent in satins. The greater portion of this gorgeous crowd were guests for the day only, to be entertained at the White House ; where, according to popular belief, feasting was to prevail all day ; and in the evening the bride and bridegroom would take up their abode at the abbey.

That such a morning should have arisen, so unnatural in the sweet month of June, struck all with dismay. We like the sun to shine at festivals. During the ceremony in the chapel, the darkness grew deeper, a darkness rarely experienced in the day-time. His Eminence the Cardinal, who had travelled down to preside at the nuptial mass, had to rub his spectacles. The old Gothic chapel with its narrow casements, in keeping with the Gothic abbey beside it, became so obscure that one countenance could not be distinguished from another, and when the bride was required to write her name in the book, she objected, saying that she could not see. One of the tapers used in the ceremony was brought near, and by its light she wrote what was required of her. In this gloom, at the conclusion of the ceremony, but still in no rain, the procession took its way back to the White House, where the bridal entertainments were held.

And so the hours passed ; the spectators, gathered in the cottages in Abbeyland, feasting a little on their own score, and gossiping away the day until the last instalment of the pageantry should pass and gladden their sight.

Evening came. And with it the jarring storm that had strangely held off so long ; wind, rain, thunder, lightning : in the midst of which Guy Pomeroy must bring forth his bride to conduct her to the abbey. The Lords of Pomeroy condescended not to the wedding tour, a fashion introduced of later years : the former lords had taken their brides straight from their maiden to their wedded home, and the modern lords disdained to abjure the custom.

"Why do they tarry?" uttered Whittaker's wife to a knot of neighbours, who had collected within her dwelling-house. Naomi Rex, from the forest, made one of them. She had been at the abbey, and in the chapel, and had now come to Whittaker's with her niece Bridget. The old woman had white satin ribbons on her cap, and Bridget was as smart as she dare be. "Half-past seven's the clock," continued Rhode Whittaker, "and they were to have come forth on the stroke of the hour."

"Why, they tarry for the weather, to be sure," spoke her husband, the second keeper.

"Nay, then they may put off their bridal garments, and Madam Wylde may just have 'em for the night," retorted Rhode Whittaker, who liked nothing so much as the sound of her own tongue. "There's no chance of this storm slackening ; and that the Lord of Pomeroy may see for himself."

"At three o'clock, the banquet was to be. Why don't they come?"

"Don't be impatient, you women," exclaimed Whittaker himself, who was standing at the open door, half in, half out. "They'll come, all in time : trust the Lord of Pomeroy for that. A bad day, sir," he added, touching his hat to his master, John Gaunt, who was passing.

"Aunt Rhode," screamed out a girl of nineteen, "I wouldn't be married on such a day as this, if I had to stop single all my life. It bodes ill luck."

"Hush-sh-sh !" came the prolonged caution from several lips. It was a bold tongue in Abbeyland that dared hint at ill-luck for a Pomeroy.

"There's nobody here but ourselves," returned the girl, in a subdued tone. "And I didn't send the storm. It's come, and there can't be harm in saying that it is. To me it seems to bode frightful luck."

"The same thing has been in my mind all day," whispered Naomi Rex, from the arm-chair, near the fire. "When I got up this morning, and saw the dead ghostly look of things—yes, you may question it, but they had a blue ghostly look, just as they had that

day last year when the heavens were darkened for the—what was it called?—the eclipse of the sun, and the cocks set on to crow at mid-day. So it has looked all day since. Thought I to myself—if ever there's ill-luck meant to be foreshadowed, it must be, this day, for the Lord and new Lady of Pomeroy. As Mary Lamp says, we did not send the storm; but, as it is here, I see not why it should not be spoken of—and the fear it brings to thoughtful minds."

"And, I just ask you all," returned the girl, delighted at being upheld in her treason by so eminent an authority as Naomi Rex, "did you ever see such lightning, or hear such thunder? Aunt Rhode knows it, though she snubs me. Hark to that peal!"

"Yes, Mary Lamp's right—it is a storm, and a day altogether out of the common," assented Naomi. "Hardly a minute of this blessed day but my silent prayers have been going up to Heaven, that the ill it too surely seems to portend may be averted."

"Strange the lord didn't have his brother, Mr. Rupert, to the wedding," cried a woman who was mounted on a chair. "Perhaps, Mr. Rupert don't care for weddings."

"He'd care for the feasting that is to come after it, though. There's to be open house at the abbey for nine days to come, and the lord and the lady are to top the feasting tables."

"I wish Mr. Rupert had been the heir," exclaimed Mary Lamp, enthusiastically. "He's a rare brave man to speak to, with a merry eye: but the lord's as cold as a stone."

An unlucky remark: the girl nearly got buffeted. The gay Rupert was not held in the favour that the lord was, for his faults were certainly not those of being cold or stony; and though the community did not praise him, it would not blame. Harsh tongues were let loose upon the girl.

"Thee'dst better not get within ken o' Mr. Rupert's merry eye, I can tell thee that, girl, or may be thee'dst find thy own the sadder for it," said an old man who sat in the opposite chair to Naomi.

The girl looked as though she would like to rebel. "I don't care," cried she: "you are all ready to lie down and let the lord step over you as he walks, but he's not half the pleasant lord that his father was, nor that Mr. Rupert would have made; I said no more than that, and where's the ill of it? T'other day he was riding out of the bean-field, none of the grooms after him, and I pulled the gate back for him and held it wide. He rode through, as stiff as a log of wood, never so much as saying thank ye, or turning his eye to see who it was, holding it."

"He is the Lord of Pomeroy, and we are his vassals," replied Mrs. Whittaker. "And you had better not talk so free, Mary Lamp. Holy Virgin! did you see that flash?"

"Here's something else to see," cried Whittaker, putting his head round the door-post again. "They be coming at last."

In spite of the wind and the pelting rain—in spite of the forked dangerous lightning and the resounding thunder, out went the younger women, leaving the windows for the aged. Out they pressed from all parts and from all quarters, until the road seemed lined, as by magic—to see those whom they had seen hundreds of times before.

But not in their bridal attire: and that was worn now. It had not been put off. The wreath of roses and orange-blossoms was yet on the bride's head, the flowing veil still fell behind her; but her cheeks' crimson had gone. The Lord of Pomeroy sat by her in his towering height; she looked as a little girl beside him; and his ever-pale complexion was not a whit less ghastly than usual, and his hare-lip was only too conspicuous. But for that lip and the unnaturally white skin, he would have been a very handsome man: handsome in a degree he was now, for his features, save the upper lip, were perfectly formed, his grey eyes were beautiful, and his height and figure of noble presence.

"She's pale now," cried one of the women; "she doesn't like the storm."

"I shouldn't," put in Mary Lamp. "Is Jeffs making his horses go slowly that we may see the better?"

"Psha, child!" rebuked a man who was standing next her. "Don't you see that Jeffs is keeping his reins tight over 'em? If he let 'em get their heads, they'd be off. Those dumb creatures be more frightened at a storm like this than are human people."

Jeffs, the coachman, sat on his box, seeming, indeed, to have as much as he could manage in the four grey horses. The carriage had been waiting at the White House at seven o'clock; and the half hour after it had struck before the lord and his bride came forth.

In that space of time the horses had become thoroughly frightened by the storm, almost unmanageable; and Jeffs, keeping his own place on the hammercloth, was reduced to the humiliation (very great to him) of ordering the two footmen to hold the heads of the leaders. So that this proud office, of which Jeffs had thought so much—that of driving home his lord and his new lady—had partially collapsed: the glitter and glare had been taken off it. From the time of starting from the White House, the storm seemed to grow worse with every minute, the horses to become more terrified, and Jeffs had had his hands full.

"Pray the patron saint of the Pomeroyes to keep back that lightning, or I shan't master 'em!" ejaculated he to himself, just as they were passing the dwelling of Whittaker.

The patron saint was deaf to poor Jeffs. For, in the very next moment a flash came, worse than any preceding it. It was followed by an awful crash of thunder; the horses reared, plunged, curveted, and finally started away at a mad pace. The two footmen, standing up behind in purple and silver, with their gold-headed canes,

bent aside in dismay to look beyond the chariot, to see whither they might be going.

"Holy Mary, help us!" uttered Jeffs. "A pretty wedding-day this is!"

And, if they were frightened, these hardy men, what must the young bride have been? She uttered a faint scream as the horses dashed onwards, started partially up, and seized the handle of the carriage door to open it. Guy drew her down again.

"Alice, what are you thinking of? It would be certain death."

She turned her white and terror-stricken face upon him. "Better walk to the abbey, through the storm and the rain, than be at the mercy of these wild horses."

"They are frightened, like you, my dearest. Jeffs can manage them. See, they are slackening their speed."

"We had better walk—if we could but get out! Oh, Guy, let us walk!"

He shook his head. It was a perilous situation, growing more perilous with every flash: but their best chance, indeed, their only chance, lay in keeping quiet within the closed carriage.

"Guy, what a day!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears of present terror; while a vague, undefined feeling of dread pervaded her as to the future. "I wish we had put it off until to-morrow. Theresa suggested it when she saw what dreadful weather it was—but mamma laughed at her."

Guy Pomeroy did not answer. He hastily turned her face towards him, so that she could not see out, and held it there, as if caressingly. The horses were at their worst. Now galloping, now rearing, plunging, and stamping in fury, and now galloping again, on they went. Guy sat, upright and calm, and she clung to him: the terrified footmen, putting life before etiquette, managed to get carefully down and reach terra firma. One fell as he let go his hold, the other staggered: but they were in safety. They ran after the carriage with their sticks, just as many of the spectators, who had been standing to see it pass, were also running. Jeffs had lost all command, and the horses were as furies.

The Lord of Pomeroy put his head out at the front window, and called aloud to his trusty coachman. "Jeffs, take care: tighten the left rein, or they'll pass the turning." And down he sat again, and shielded his bride's face as before. She was shivering. "Courage, my love," he whispered: "another minute or two, and we shall be in the more sheltered drive, close to the abbey."

Jeffs was skilful and experienced, and Jeffs "took care," as his lord enjoined; but skill and care are sometimes powerless to arrest the career of animals, frightened to madness. The rein was tightened in vain; the horses would not turn on their proper path but dashed blindly forward beyond it. And those, following behind, uttered a shrill cry of despair as the horses passed it and tore on—

wards, for they were plunging on to a dangerous road—a road which on one side had no protection. The lord saw his danger; but he thought far less of it than of keeping its sight from *her*. She struggled her face free, in spite of him, and looked up.

"We are on the precipice!" she shrieked. "Oh, Guy, we are on the precipice!"

"Hush, hush, child!" he implored with strained lips. "If Jeffs can keep them on the road, we are safe; they will stop at the hill. Don't scream, Alice, it may increase their terror. I think the storm is somewhat abating."

Her voice died away, and she remained quiet as a lamb, hiding her face upon his breast, and clasping him with a tight, nervous clasp: in that strong form, although she did not love it, there seemed to be protection: but she shook so, that she almost caused him to shake, betraying how excessive was her alarm. The storm, that had seemed to lull for a moment, raged again in its fury, and the horses raged in theirs; now kicking, now foaming, now rearing themselves bolt upright. Jeffs was flung from the box; and, in a second more, horses, carriage, and inmates had rolled down the precipice, on to the grass.

The fall had not been more than some few feet: had the horses gone further, it would have been much greater, for the hill gradually ascended to a height, where it overlooked the sea. The runners, their senseless shouts died away into horror-stricken silence, passed the dead body of Jeffs—dead it looked—and gazed over the side. Carriage and horses lay in a heap, an appalling mass; horses plunging, one of them shrieking. Did you ever hear the shriek of a wounded and frightened horse, reader? It is not pleasant to listen to.

Gaunt, the gamekeeper, came up first; he took out his knife and cut the traces. Two of the horses would never rise again; the other two dashed away in their freedom: and then the spectators climbed up and looked in at the carriage window, the carriage lying on its side.

"Get me out," said the Lord of Pomeroy.

He was not dead, at any rate: he was bruised and shaken, and there was a deep cut on his forehead: but his poor young bride lay senseless. "She has fainted from terror," said Guy, when she was extricated from the chariot; and he gently picked her up in his arms, her light weight being but as a feather in his great strength. So would he have borne her to the abbey.

"The lord had better not," interposed Gaunt, sensibly. "Should any bones be broken, it might do worse injury. Let a mattress be brought."

Guy Pomeroy sat down on the wet grass until the mattress should come, and held her upon him. Water was sprinkled over her face; some one suggested that her hands should be chafed; and the gloves were drawn off. Guy took the left hand in his. Alice was wearing

three or four rings. Guy drew them off, and dropped them into his waistcoat pocket.

But the rubbing and the water did not restore her to consciousness. The mattress was brought and she was borne to the abbey; and still she did not revive. Mr. Norris, the surgeon, entered it as they did; and he and Guy remained alone with her. She was placed upon a table, and the surgeon bent over her, touching her in various parts, touching her head and face, bending down his ear to her mouth and heart. A frightful, terrible fear stole suddenly into Guy's breast.

"She is not dead, is she?" he gasped, controlling his voice and face to calmness.

"Oh no, she is not dead," was Mr. Norris's reply. "But I fear there may be some slight concussion of the brain."

Meanwhile poor Jeffs had been brought into the abbey and was now seated upon a couch in the housekeeper's parlour. Beyond a few bruises on the left side, the side on which he fell, and sprained wrists and an aching shoulder, Jeffs had not sustained damage. He sat there now, being comforted with a liberal supply of some delicious cordial, and was holding forth to such of the servants as could spare time from the general confusion to gather around him: No ignominy like unto this had ever fallen upon Jeffs. To have been flung from the box when he was driving the Lord and Lady of Pomeroy home on their wedding-day, so that the horses had obtained their fling and brought on the catastrophe which had ensued, would be more than enough humiliation for his lifetime.

"I'd not ha' minded if they'd killed me, the brutes, so that I had drove the lord home all right first," he protested earnestly, in a voice that had a sound of tears in it. "And for two o' that matchless grey team to be done for, and me spared!"

"But don't your shoulder give you pain, Jeffs—and all the rest of your injuries?" cried Bridget, who was sure to be at the top and tail of every gathering—when it afforded an opportunity for gossip.

"Drat my shoulder!—and my injuries!" retorted Jeffs, with scant gallantry. "What's my injuries, put alongside o' that there pitch off the box—and of them there two sweet greys?"

"Well, I didn't mean to offend you," said Bridget soothingly, who never quarrelled with anybody. "I'm sure, Jeffs, when I saw you pass with those horses all rearing and prancing, my heart was in my mouth. You were pulling at them, and no mistake."

"Pulling!—look at my sprained wrists," cried Jeffs, holding out his unfortunate hands. "Did you ever see horses in such a fright afore?"

"No," said Bridget, "and I never wish to see it again. Tom Whittaker said they put him in mind of tigers."

"What right have Tom Whittaker to call my horses tigers?"

"I'm sure they were just as fierce as tigers," insisted Bridget, who liked to have the last word. "But there—take another sup, Jeffs, and comfort yourself; you'll be better to-morrow."

"My two greys won't be better," lamented Jeffs. "You'd not match that team in all the county for perfection and beauty. And for two of 'em to come to this untimely end! It'll be a'most the end of me. All through the wind! A blowing, and a roaring, and a driving round 'em like mad, it was. It all but whistled my state cocked-hat off."

Mr. Norris remained with the Lady of Pomeroy. They could not restore her to consciousness. Throughout the whole of the night, she did not revive; as the hours struck, one hour succeeding to the last, each found her in the same state. The doctor and the attendants waited round her bed, and Guy paced the rooms of the abbey, one room after another; now stealing in to the chamber and gazing on her, and now departing on his restless walk again.

And that was the ending of the Lord of Pomeroy's wedding-day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG LADY OF POMEROY.

A CONCUSSION of the brain it had proved to be, but not a dangerous one. Sooner than might have been expected, Mrs. Pomeroy grew better, was herself again, and progressing towards recovery.

Cautious nurses were Mrs. Wylde and Joan; could attention have cured Alice, she had been well forthwith. Guy had been excluded from the room. Guy rebelled: he thought he could make as good a nurse as the best of them. Neither would they allow her to speak, until she would be quiet no longer.

"How long have I lain here?" at length asked she of Mrs. Wylde.

"Eight days, my dear."

"This is a strange room. Is it the abbey?"

"Of course it is. It is your own room in it."

"I was married, was I not?" continued Mrs. Pomeroy.

"Why, don't you remember it?" returned her mother.

"Yes, I remember it. I lay and thought things over yesterday: and I remember the awful day—and oh, mother!" shuddering, "I remember the drive home. I remember the furious horses, and Guy holding me. Did we fall over the precipice?"

"Only at the lower part of it. The accident was a sad one," added Mrs. Wylde, "but do not recur to it now, Alice; no lives were lost. Jeffs was thought to be badly hurt at the time; but he is better. Quite well, indeed."

Mrs. Pomeroy raised herself in bed, sitting up and looking eagerly at her mother. "Did it kill Guy?" she asked, in a whisper.

"Good gracious, no, child! Don't frighten yourself with these imaginative fancies. Lie down. The Lord of Pomeroy was not hurt—to speak of." Had it been to save her credit, Mrs. Wylde could not have helped giving Guy Pomeroy this title upon every possible occasion: the charm it bore for her ears was beyond telling. She never called him Mr. Pomeroy: though that is what he was, in spite of the title personally accorded him. "Your beautiful white dress is the worst off: its skirts lay in the wet and muddy grass: I'll leave you to judge the state it was in. And the wreath was crushed, and the veil torn. Now, don't talk any more."

There was a few minutes' pause, and then the invalid began again. Her hands were raised before her, and she appeared to be looking at them. "If I am married, where's my wedding ring?"

"Now, Alice, how can you talk so nonsensically? 'If I am married'! You must be putting it on. Don't you remember?"

"I suppose I do," sighed Alice. "Where is my wedding-ring?"

"The Lord of Pomeroy has it."

"Did Guy——"

"I will not have you talk any more," interrupted Mrs. Wylde. "Here you are talking as if you were doing it for a wager. Wait until you are stronger."

"If I did not feel equal to it, I should not talk, mamma. My head feels a little light, that is all. I must talk; it amuses me; and I am sure there's no reason why I should not."

"At any rate, Alice, there's a slight flush on your face. Lie still for a little while, and then you may talk again."

She quitted the room. Alice, compelled to silence, lay and thought; her mind very busy. By-and-by Miss Pomeroy entered.

"Joan, come here," she said; "sit down close to me. What a shocking accident this has been!"

"It has," replied Joan, drawing a chair forward. "But you are getting better, therefore——"

"Joan, I want to ask you something—and now you answer me the truth; what you think, and whether I am not right. It was an awful day: such a day, I should think, as has never been known, here or anywhere, and it was an awful accident: and the days previous to it were calm and beautiful, and I daresay the days subsequent have been so. Have they?"

"Yes," replied Joan, unsuspecting of her young sister-in-law's drift. "The day following the accident arose bright and lovely as the days previous had been; bearing no trace, save in the wet ground and the damaged crops, of the angry day that had intervened."

"Well, now, Joan, should you not say that it was an omen of evil for me and Guy?"

Joan would not answer. Given to superstition, as were all the

Pomeroy—the very abbey itself, with its tales and its gloom, was enough to embue them with it—she had been deducing augury of ill to her brother and his wife from the strange day and the accident it had led to; but she had kept the feeling within her own breast. Others were not so silent; and Guy had been nearly driven savage by the evil prognostications whispered around him.

"You don't speak, Joan: you will not speak: and I know what that means. Here's mamma again!"

"Alice, the Lord of Pomeroy is coming in to pay you a visit."

Alice rose up in bed, startled; and looked at her mother.

"The Lord of Pomeroy! Here!"

"Yes. He is waiting now. He waylaid me in the corridor to say so."

Mrs. Pomeroy turned crimson to the roots of her hair. "I cannot see him here; in bed! He must wait until I am up and in my dressing-room: that will be in a day or two."

"Nonsense," returned Mrs. Wylde. "He is your husband, remember. We will dress you up in a shawl and a pretty cap, to look smart for the visit. Don't be fastidious."

"I *won't* see him, then," said Mrs. Pomeroy.

"How very ridiculous! he will not eat you. Why, he wanted to make one of your nurses, Alice."

Mrs. Pomeroy looked red and very indignant. "I am astonished at you, mamma!"

"I am astonished at you," returned Mrs. Wylde. "He has a *right* to see you, and he will exercise it. I can tell you, Alice, he is not pleased at having been kept out of your room, like a stranger; it has tried his temper and his feelings: but Mr. Norris and Dr. Bell said so much about your not being excited, that he yielded to them, and contented himself with taking a peep at you through the open door now and then."

"It is unreasonable," pouted Alice.

"You must be unreasonable yourself to say so," retorted Mrs. Wylde. "But I will leave your husband to settle that with you. To tell you the truth, I knew he was coming in to-day, and that's why I did not want you to fatigue yourself with talking beforehand."

Alice looked round at Joan. She was standing with compressed lips and severe expression: displeased, at least so Alice interpreted it, to hear this objection raised to a simple and, what might be called, a ceremonious visit. Guy determined, her mother determined, and Joan angry!—Alice began to think that she might as well give in.

The Lord of Pomeroy entered; and Mrs. Wylde and Joan closed the door upon him. Alice lay, well covered up; her pretty face, made "smart" in its pretty cap, nearly buried in the pillow. Guy bent down to kiss her—which was very natural.

"Oh, don't, please," cried Alice, pushing him back with her hand, and turning her face away; "my head is not strong yet, and must not be touched." But the Lord of Pomeroy was her husband now,

and chose to judge for himself: and he turned her face back again and took the kiss; another and yet another, but in all gentleness. He would be far more careful of her than she was of herself. Then he sat down, spoke a little of the intense anxiety her illness had caused him, and of his deep gratitude to Him, who is the giver of all good, for her, so far, recovery. In these quiet moments, all the gentleness in his nature in full exercise, none could help liking the Lord of Pomeroy.

Alice heard him pretty patiently. But he had hardly finished when she began to speak somewhat eagerly.

"Guy."

"What, my dearest?"

"I want you to listen to me; I am going to say something that I have been thinking of yesterday and to-day. I never was superstitious, Guy; but it is impossible to look upon what has happened without some such kind of feeling intruding."

"The accident will have no lasting consequences," interrupted Guy Pomeroy, possibly doomed, as it appeared, to hear reiterated by his bride the same song he had been obliged to hear from others.

"The accident was awful," she rejoined, with a shudder. "Oh, Guy! I never shall forget the terror I felt at the snorting and flying horses. How could you maintain your presence of mind?"

"I had you with me."

"But I look not so much at the accident itself, as at the strange wild day," she resumed. "The weather has never been like that. We have had summer storms, terrific storms, fatal to property and to life, but they have come on naturally, Guy, and have cleared again after they had spent themselves. But that strange day was unnatural."

"It was uncommon," said the Lord of Pomeroy.

"Guy, it was unnatural. It seemed to be sent as a warning to us."

"A warning to us?"

"Yes. Not to enter into our union: the very heavens lowered their displeasure upon it."

"Alice! Who has been putting these notions into your head?"

"Not anyone," she answered. "Mamma and Joan have kept me silent, not allowing me to speak, or speaking to me. I could not shut my eyes to the weather, Guy. I told Joan, just now, that it was a bad omen for you and for me, but she would not answer me."

"Joan was right."

"Perhaps so—but I know what she thinks. You are a man, Guy, and therefore will pretend to despise these fears; perhaps you do despise them: but, rely upon it, that strange day was sent to portend ill to us, if ever ill was portended yet."

"Then, my dear, we will ward off the ill together. I will ward all ill from you, heaven helping me."

"We can ward it off in one way," said Alice: "it is the only way left to us."

"Well?" returned Guy, smiling.

"By never being more to each other than we are now," she whispered: "by getting the marriage annulled."

"What!" uttered Guy, a frown of mingled pain and astonishment displacing the smile upon his face.

"It could be done, Guy. And then we may laugh at the past storm, and have no fears."

"Your head must be still light from fever, Alice!"

She put out her left hand and clasped his arm. "Do not let us tempt Fate, Guy. That day was as surely an omen of ill upon our union; as sure—as sure as anything can be in this world. And in what other light could the accident to me be regarded, but as an awful, interposed veto against my entering the abbey as its mistress?"

Guy had taken her left hand to hold between his, and was playing with her fingers. "It should have come sooner, then, if it had that intention," said he, gaily. "Do you see this?"

He held up her hand, so that she might see it: he had slipped on her wedding-ring. Alice strove to draw her hand away.

"Had Fate—as you call it—wished to interpose her veto upon your entering the abbey, she should have been rather more prompt, and not have waited until you were my wife."

"To treat it in that mocking way, Guy, is——wicked."

"Nay, my dear, I say nothing but the truth. If Fate, human or hobgoblin, owed us a grudge and set herself to scowl upon our marriage, she should not have been quite so dilatory. The interposition should have come before you quitted your mother's house and your mother's name."

"It is not too late, Guy: it may be managed. When I am well enough to be moved I can go back home with my mother."

Guy did his best to keep his anger within bounds. "Alice, you talk like a child. After having married me, come home to me, stopped with me, you think you could go back from it all, and become Alice Wylde again! What would the world say of you? Nothing laudable, I ween."

"You are cruel," was her tearful response. "I thought the Lord of Pomeroy deemed himself a gentleman."

"I hope he is one. But he is your husband."

"The marriage can be easily broken," she resumed, "for the Pomeroy influence is great at Rome: and you know, Guy, my heart never was in it. You shall wed a better wife, and I will be Alice Wylde again."

One of the haughty Pomeroy scowls came over the lord's face. "That you may seek, and wed, the renegade Rupert—who won your heart with his false vows, and carried its tales of credulity to amuse his real idol! who—who ——"

Guy paused: his temper had overmastered him, but his senses were

returning: in a calmer moment he would have bitten out his tongue, rather than have so taunted her, now she was his wife. He had never thought to speak the name of Rupert to her again: he wished it to be equally shunned by the one as by the other.

"You are generous!" she returned, speaking with scorn to keep down the tears. "Were I free as air, and Rupert Pomeroy came to me in his soul's repentance, pleading for love and pardon, I would trample him under foot, rather than listen. Had I a hope now to give to Rupert, I should never have consented to marry you."

The Lord of Pomeroy rose; his passion had changed to calmness. "I beg your pardon," he softly whispered: "in this interview we have each something to forgive the other. You should not so have spoken, Alice: my wife you have been made by your own vows, and my wife you are. Anyone less ignorant of the ways of the world than you are, would never have thought of such a thing."

She burst into tears. "I am sure they all think we shall have dreadful luck."

"Oh, child, do not speak so. Not if I can shield you from it. Dry your tears. And when I come in again, my dearest, meet me as a friend; not as a foe."

He bent down and kissed her face, as he had done at entering, and quitted the room. Mrs. Wylde came into it, but Alice motioned her away, and said she was going to sleep: so she was left alone.

Droll sleep it was: a prolonged fit of sobs and tears. But Guy had left upon her hand the wedding-ring: a sure earnest that she could not go from him.

Mrs. Wylde caught just the two first syllables of the word, separation, and was for applying a couple of blisters behind her daughter's ears, really believing her brain to be affected; she told her she deserved a good shaking for even imagining so great a scandal. Alice contrived to spin out the "getting well" to what Guy thought an interminable period. At length, Mrs. Wylde quitted the abbey, leaving a good private scolding for Alice behind her; and Alice assumed her proper station as the abbey's mistress.

And then Guy filled it with the guests that had been expecting to come ever since the wedding. Feasting was the order of the day; gaiety reigned; dinners, drives, dressing, and vanity. In the midst of this, all so dear to her pleasure-loving heart, Alice was forgetting her fears of evil; and if she was not precisely in the seventh heaven of happiness as the wife of Guy, she was certainly not miserable. She loved gaiety; and the deference paid her, both as a bride and as the Lady of Pomeroy, turned her head with pleasure. The women envied, the men admired, Guy loved; and Alice Pomeroy's life was as one long dream of indulged vanity.

"Which is best, Lady of Pomeroy," Guy said to her one day, laughingly: "to reign here the abbey's mistress and my idolized wife, or to have gone back home again to be Alice Wylde?"

"I was ill and weak, dear Guy," she pleaded, "and the storm had so frightened me. I am glad to be here."

"You shall always be glad, my dearest, if it depend on me," whispered Guy. And Alice turned to him with a loving look, and a loving word. She had resolutely set herself to overcome the distaste she once felt for him, and she was succeeding.

"Joan," spoke the Honourable Mrs. Capel one day when the two sisters were together in the garden, "I do not like our new sister-in-law."

"No?" said Joan.

"Not at all. Do you?"

The question was pointedly put. In her heart of hearts, Joan did not like Alice Pomeroy, had never been able (in spite of her efforts) to bring herself to like her when she was Alice Wylde. But Joan was all for peace, for making the best of things, and therefore felt very unwilling to confess as much, even in confidence.

"And I wonder at Guy's infatuation," added Mrs. Capel.

The two sisters presented a contrast in looks. Isabel lively and beautiful; Joan grave of manner, hard of feature, and too tall for a woman. The one liked dress; the other shunned it. Look at them to-day: Isabel wears a delicate silk (too costly for her purse) that gleams and changes in the sun; Joan has on some delectable thick dull material of the sober colour she favours—dark purple.

"Why do you not like her, Isabel?"

"Because I don't," laughed Mrs. Capel. "If that's not a sufficient reason, Joan, I hardly know that I can give another. There's something about her that jars against me: something that tells me she is not truthful; and certainly she is not a lady at heart."

"But, Isabel——"

"Well?"

"Alice *is* his wife: and though we may not like her as well as we could wish, only one thing remains—to make the best of it."

"Quite right—especially for you who will see more of her than I shall. My dear Joan, had he married a negress you would have said, Make the best of it."

"I daresay we shall like her in time—when she has shaken down into her place, and ——"

"Become less assumptious, you would say. Is that a right word? Anyway, you know what I mean. She is eaten up with vanity: as her mother is with pretension. I don't believe the woman has ever before mixed with people of degree. But there—you need not knit your brow, Joan; all the talking in the world will not undo the marriage, so we'll just leave it. Guy has chosen the girl with his eyes open; and I hope with all my heart she will make him happy. But now, Joan, where is Sybilla Gaunt?"

Miss Pomeroy shook her head. She wished she knew.

"Can it be true that she lost her head?"

"Yes. Unfortunately."

"Well, I don't believe it."

"*There's no room to doubt, Isabel; I tell it you: and I would almost as soon have had to tell it of myself.*"

"Where's Rupert?" resumed Mrs. Capel sharply.

"In London—and in some trouble, I fear."

"Debt, of course. It will always be so with Rupert. But—is it true that he and Sybilla left together?"

"No."

"What does Guy say to it all?"

"Nothing. He will not allow the subject to be mentioned. I can see that, from some cause or other, his heart is waging war with Rupert."

"I have no patience with Rupert. He is too thoughtless; he does not care what scrapes he gets into. I suppose you know that George's regiment is ordered to India. Dear George! I should so much like to have seen him. He is the best of them all, Joan."

Joan did not answer. She loved her brother George dearly, and was grieved that he should be going away for years. Her eyes seemed to have a far-off look in them, as they gazed at the narrow strip of blue sky seen above the high enclosing walls of the shrubbery, just as though she could see India up there.

"Guy is cold and domineering, Rupert fonder of the world than of home, Leolin just the least bit in the world selfish," went on Mrs. Capel, summing up the virtues of her brothers; "but George is good and winsome. And yet, he is the one that must go away from us over the seas!"

"It is ever thus, I think," said Joan. "Any pleasure we particularly wish for in this life is sure to be marred. George is the one we would have liked to keep near us, and George is the one to go."

On this same morning, it chanced that Alice Pomeroy with two of her younger guests was in her own special sitting-room; one that Guy had re-decorated so charmingly, just before the marriage, for his expected bride. Alice did not like dull and gloomy rooms, she said; so, to please her, he made this into a modern one. It was vastly pretty, no doubt; with its pink silk hangings, its mirrors and its nick-nacks; and it pleased Alice's eye: but it was sadly out of keeping with the grand and sombre old abbey.

Lady Lucy Hetley, a pretty girl, daughter of the Earl of Essington, sat on the music stool, talking and playing by turns; Miss Peters was standing at the window, some embroidery in her hand; and Alice lay back at ease in a costly arm chair slightly swaying one foot about, and doing nothing.

"Why don't you show us your wedding dress, Mrs. Pomeroy?" asked Lady Lucy, the conversation having turned to that all-important article in a young lady's eyes.

"I will if you like. Come into my dressing-room," added Alice. "I suppose it must be somewhere here," she remarked, opening drawers and wardrobes; "but I declare I've never thought of the dress since my wedding-day. I fancy mamma said something about its having been hurt by the wet."

"No wonder you have not thought of it—with such a termination as the day had," said Mary Peters. "I think I should have died of fright in the carriage."

"Oh, you can't imagine what it was!" returned Alice, slightly shuddering. "What with the dreadful storm and the furious horses, I—I don't know how I lived through it. Guy turned my face down upon him and kept it there, so that I should not see. But for him I should have jumped out of the carriage. I have wondered since that Guy could have been so calm himself. But now—where can my dress be?—where have they put it? I must ring for Theresa."

Theresa came in, quiet-looking as usual, in her close cap and neat grey gown. When asked about the wedding-dress, she said it was in the large wardrobe closet near the end of the wing. At this news, away went the three young ladies to the closet, and Mrs. Pomeroy threw open the door.

It was hanging just in front of them as they entered: the once beautiful dress of rich white silk with its costly white lace flounces, now shrunken, muddy, and yellow with the wet and dirt. The young ladies stood contemplating it with dismayed faces.

"What a sad pity!" breathed Miss Peters.

"But the flounces do not seem torn; at least, they are not on this side," observed Lady Lucy. "They might be cleaned and renovated."

She turned the skirt slightly, and bent forward to look further. Something must have startled her, for she dropped it suddenly and drew back with a faint scream.

"It is covered with blood," she shuddered, turning her pale face towards Mrs. Pomeroy.

"With blood!"

"A long stream, from the top to the flounces. I—I don't like to see blood."

Curiosity, even to look at disagreeable sights, is irrepressible, and both Mrs. Pomeroy and Mary Peters pressed forward. It was as Lucy Hetley said: a long, dark, ugly stain. They shut the closet door in trepidation, almost as though they were shutting in a ghost, turned the key, and hastened back to the dressing-room.

"I can't account for it—for what should bring that mark there; I cannot understand it one bit," spoke Alice Pomeroy from the low chair on which she had sunk down.

"You must have been wounded."

"But I was not. Nothing was hurt but my head, and that did not bleed. It must have come on the dress in the closet."

This sounded so very ghostly a suggestion, carrying them back to

the times of Mrs. Radcliffe and all kinds of unearthly thoughts, that they drew together, although it was broad daylight. The young Lady of Pomeroy was feeling somewhat uncomfortable. Dormant in her heart, lay the seeds of a superstition that might be nourished in time to be formidable.

"Do you know anything about the stain on my dress, Theresa?" she lifted her head to ask.

"My lady, no."

Mrs. Pomeroy impulsively ran off in search of her husband. He was alone in the library, writing a letter. Alice went behind his chair, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Guy, how did that—that frightful stain come upon my bridal dress? Do you know?"

Guy laid down his pen, and drew the hand to him with a caressing movement. "What stain, my darling?"

"Of blood," she whispered. "A long, frightful stain all down it. The dress is altogether spoiled."

"Won't it wash?"

"Wash!" she exclaimed, amazed at the ignorance of mankind. "But we can't think where it came from, Guy. I was not wounded."

"I was," replied Guy. He pushed aside the hair from his right temple and exhibited a mark that he would retain for life.

"That is where it came from, Alice. As I held you on the bank, the blood ran down upon your dress without my observing it."

She heaved a sigh of relief. "Oh yes, that's how it was, then. We have been thinking it must have got on mysteriously in the closet. Such things have been heard of, you know, Guy. The old story-books are full of them."

"I'm sure I don't know," said Guy laughing. "Never mind your spoiled dress, love: we will buy you another."

"Ah, Guy—you can't buy me another wedding-dress," she answered, a strange mournfulness in her tone. "And it is a sad pity that that stain should have come upon it: all things bode ill luck together."

"You foolish girl: you silly, silly child," he uttered fondly. "My coat came off the worst. As to ill luck—you are a Pomeroy now. And ill luck is a thing we don't think about, we Pomeroyes."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PREDICTION.

THE marriage festivities came to an end; the guests departed, and the young Lady of Pomeroy was alone.

She did not like to be alone. She liked show and state and glitter and vanity. The abbey had been filled with these desirable acquisitions when she married Guy Pomeroy: in fact, it may with

justice be said that she married him to obtain them. It was all very well to be the Lady of Pomeroy ; to be conscious that she filled that exalted position in the county ; to be called "my lady" by the servants more often than "madam ;" very gratifying indeed, all this, to her vain heart ; but she craved for something more.

Guy was to have taken his wife to town when the festivities were over, that she might be presented at the late drawing-room in June. To be presented at court seemed to Alice Wyldé one of the few great and desirable and unattainable ends of this life ; for we are writing of many years ago, when it was not the custom for every Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Brown to intrude there. Of all the honours she would drop into by the marriage, that was looked upon as the chiefest ; and it was the one she most ardently hungered for.

But now—see how fate and fortune cheat us ! Any thing so intensely coveted as Alice coveted that, is, all too often, never realised. Some adverse cross or other is sure to step in and frustrate it. In this case it was the illness arising from the accident on the wedding-day. Long before the guests had come and gone after her recovery, the Queen's drawing-rooms were over. Alice perforce stayed where she was, and made the best of Pomeroy Abbey. But, as the time went on, she found it insufferably dull.

Take to-day as a specimen. It is rather a gloomy day in November, just on a par with the gloomy abbey itself, and Alice feels bored to death. Guy went out shooting with early morning ; he may come in to luncheon, or he may not ; there's no telling ; and Alice sits at the window and looks out on the dreary landscape—dreary it ever seems to her. She is dressed to perfection : a gown of soft grey cachemere, trimmed very much with pink silk, and a coquettish cap of pink ribbon and white lace upon her pretty hair. But where's the use of being dressed to perfection when no admiring eyes are near to view it ?—the question rang grumbly through Alice's thoughts rather too often. She is not reading ; she is not working. The latter she detests ; the former also—unless, indeed, it be a foolish novel, one of those poor and silly ones that a mind of ordinary intellect can hardly bear to read. In dressing, flirting, and vapid speech she was an adept ; but these will not carry a woman happily through life. Alice's intellect was, in truth, not of the highest order : but Guy had not yet found it out. That he would discover it fast enough in time, was to be supposed ; for he was clever himself, and she could never be a companion to him. Now and then he did already think her rather silly.

"Why can't they address me as Lady Pomeroy ?" she said to him one day in a fractious tone, upon receiving a note whose superscription did not please her.

"Because you are not Lady Pomeroy, Alice. You are Mrs. Pomeroy."

"You are addressed as the Lord of Pomeroy ?"

"I am always so addressed in writing. You may be addressed as the Lady of Pomeroy, or as Mrs. Pomeroy—as people please."

"Then I don't like to be addressed as Mrs. Pomeroy," pouted Alice. "I ought to be Lady Pomeroy."

"Don't be silly, child," said Guy, slightly knitting his brow. "The title is personally accorded me in courtesy and from long-established usage; it does not confer any benefit upon those connected with me."

This was not a solitary instance—but others need not be mentioned. And we return to Alice, seated in her salon on the dark November day.

"Oh, dear!" she cried, with a prolonged yawn, "how dull everything is!"

For the past two or three weeks, Mrs. Pomeroy had not felt well, which tended to increase her lassitude. When she complained, her mother, and all the gossips who dared, told her she must be patient; her indisposition was only what might be expected. But there sits Alice to-day, feeling out of sorts, dreary, dull, and with nothing in the world to do.

"Theresa," she called out, as a footstep passed the half-open door.

But it was the housekeeper who looked in. "It is not Theresa," she said. "Does the lady require anything that I can do for her?"

"Where is Theresa?"

"She is gone over to the White House, my lady."

"What a long time she stays there! She ought to have been back ever so long ago. No, I don't want anything. Send Theresa in when she does come."

Mrs. Rex met Theresa in the corridor. "Your lady is asking for you," she said to her. "Go in at once, for she seems impatient."

"My lady always is impatient now," thought Theresa. "I suppose I may take off my bonnet first."

"Well, what news have you?" began Alice, sharply, as the maid appeared. "How is mamma?"

"She is quite well, madam, and sends her love to you. As to news, I have not brought any."

"Did you get the bracelet?"

"No, madam, and they can't find it anywhere. Mrs. Wylde thinks you must have dropped it on getting into the carriage, or on getting out of it. She says she saw it on your arm when the lord was putting on your opera cloak in the hall."

The previous evening, Alice and Guy had dined with Mrs. Wylde. After her return home, when undressing, Alice missed one of her bracelets. It was a band of filigree gold, the clasp set with pearls. After breakfast this morning, she had dispatched Theresa to the White House, believing she must have left it there.

"Mamma says she saw it on my arm when my cloak was being put on, does she? I daresay I dropped it in the hall. I daresay they have not half looked."

"Indeed, my lady, we looked well; looked in every crick and corner of it."

"Well, you must find it, Theresa. If it's not there it must be elsewhere."

"I would be too glad to find it, madam," heartily responded Theresa; "though I'm sure I don't know where to look. The lord said just now ——"

"Have you seen the lord?" interrupted Alice.

"He was crossing the upper field with Mr. Gaunt and the two keepers, just as I left the White House," explained Theresa. "I told him that the bracelet was not found, and he said it had recurred to his memory that in coming home last night, you put your arm out of the carriage window to feel whether it still rained. He thinks it may have dropped off then."

"Did I," said Alice; "I'm sure I forget. If it did drop off then, some thief may have picked it up."

"And the lord desired me to say that he should not be in to luncheon, madam," added Theresa, as she withdrew. "They were going to have some at the upper covers."

The Lady of Pomeroy sat on again, yawning and sighing and looking at the dreary landscape till lunch time. That meal, taken for form's sake, for her appetite was not as good as it used to be, she returned to her place in the morning-room, and yawned through the afternoon, done to death nearly with ennui, at the lack of something to do. She had no resources within herself; she seemed to have no object to live for.

Towards dusk the lost bracelet was brought in. One of the village labourers, going forth in the morning to his day's work, had picked it up in the highway: dropped there no doubt when she had put her arm out of the carriage the previous evening.

And thus the time, the days and the weeks, interspersed with a little receiving and visiting, contrived to pass for Mrs. Pomeroy. The visiting might have been more extensive, but that somehow or other she was not so popular as she might have been. Whether it was that the old county families resented her want of birth and regarded her as somewhat of an interloper amongst them; or whether it was herself they did not like, certain it was, that Alice was not courted so much as one might have expected the Lord of Pomeroy's wife to be.

The winter passed, spring followed, and summer came round again. There is little of event to tell that could interest the reader. Alice was in delicate health; her presentation at court had again to be postponed. Visiting abroad and entertaining guests at home had alike to be given up by her, for she could do nothing but nurse herself and her sickness. But Guy was in a wondrous flow of spirits, for there was expected an heir to Pomeroy.

One evening in June, when Guy was dining out, Alice, after her own dinner, went into the oak room, which faced the quadrangle.

The sun was setting in a sky of crimson and gold : Alice could see the brightness over the opposite side of the abbey—the west wing. It has been already said that the front pile and the north pile were alone inhabited. The south wing was habitable so far as furniture went : the west wing was not habitable, and had the reputation of being haunted. Sitting there alone, Mrs. Pomeroy's thoughts wandered to the vast extent of the abbey—and what an army of servants it must have taken to fill it when fully inhabited in the days gone by. She remembered a boast she had once made—that should she ever be the abbey's mistress, she would cause it to be renovated, so that the county should not know it again. Opposite to her was the west wing, and those rooms she had never seen. A sudden inclination came over her to look at them now, this very evening. More than once she had asked Guy to take her over those rooms ; he always answered that he would on the first opportunity—but somehow the opportunity had never come. One grave request he had made to her ; nay it was a command—that *she would not attempt to go up without him*. This came into her mind now.

"As if it could signify," decided Alice at last, after pondering the matter a minute or two. "Guy's only afraid I should hurt myself, going up those narrow stairs. Yes, I will go ; and old Jerome must attend me with the keys."

Jerome, summoned by his lady to show her over the west wing, appeared in a state of intense astonishment, holding in his hand a huge bunch of keys. He was custodian of the abbey.

"Had not the lady better defer her visit till the morrow ?" asked Jerome. "It will soon be dark."

"Not at all, Jerome ; I am going now," answered Mrs. Pomeroy.

They proceeded through the cloisters of the north wing, to the north tower. Jerome fumbled over his keys ; and, unlocking the door, they ascended the narrow staircase of the tower, Mrs. Pomeroy folding her skirts closely around her, and from thence passed into the west wing. Peering about her in the dim light, Mrs. Pomeroy saw, as she and Jerome passed through the rooms, that they yet bore some scant remains of furniture, though the hangings were dropping to pieces. When they came to the last room—Jerome called it so—Mrs. Pomeroy detected a small door at its end covered with tapestry.

"Jerome," she exclaimed, "this must lead into the west tower."

The old man had turned to one of the windows, and was looking steadfastly down into the court. Mrs. Pomeroy repeated her remark.

"This door, Jerome. Open it."

"That room is never entered," he replied.

"Never entered !" returned Mrs. Pomeroy. "Why not ? I shall enter it."

"I have not the key," returned Jerome.

"Where is it, then ?"

Jerome hesitated. "Maybe—maybe the lord keeps it. That's the haunted room, madam."

Mrs. Pomeroy had heard of the haunted room, both before she entered the abbey and since. Not being so much of a believer in immaterial bodies as she was in weather-signs and such-like omens, she became possessed with a strong desire to explore it.

"Has the lady never heard that apparitions have been seen there?" returned Jerome, in a tone of awe.

"Apparitions don't come before the sun has set," promptly replied the Lady of Pomeroy. "You go back, Jerome, and hunt among all that heap of keys in that key closet of yours, and find the right one."

Jerome had no power to say he would not go. He turned unwillingly, and attempted to take the bunch of keys which hung to the lock; the lock of the room they were in. No: try as he would, he could not take it out: the key that he had himself put into the lock adhered to it.

"You do not want those keys to find the other key," said Mrs. Pomeroy. "Leave them where they are."

"I think this key will only come out when the door's closed and locked," muttered Jerome, trying ineffectually still.

He went away at length. Mrs. Pomeroy, as much to pass the time as anything, touched the keys, and out they came. "What a curious thing that Jerome could not do it!" thought she. "They seemed to fall into my hand. That old man must be getting stupid."

She held them, and read their labels, which indicated the particular room each belonged to. On one, however, was simply written "The Key." "The key?" debated Mrs. Pomeroy, "that must be the key of the haunted room, I should think. I'll try it."

She drew aside the hangings, inserted it in the lock, and, with a harsh, grating sound, the door flew open, the wind and the dust blowing unpleasantly in the face of Mrs. Pomeroy.

She shrank back. Her courage failed. By daylight or by dark, it is not pleasant to a mind where any superstition exists to enter alone a "haunted" room. Mrs. Pomeroy went back to the casement and stood looking into the court. There she saw Bridget: obeying an impulse, she pulled open, with some trouble, the casement, trellised with its small panes, and signed to her to come up. Bridget looked thunderstruck at seeing her lady there, but obeyed the signal: came through the north cloisters, ascended the stairs of the north tower, passed through the west rooms, and joined her.

"Hold these hangings back for me," said Mrs. Pomeroy. "They are nothing but a cloud of dust."

The woman obeyed, but with a wondering gesture. "Does the Lady of Pomeroy know what this room is?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Pomeroy, passing in. "Come with me, Bridget."

It was a small, circular room, panelled with dark mahogany. A

narrow casement faced the quadrangle ; but, like the other rooms, there was no look-out to the opposite side, the open country. The room was completely furnished with velvet that had once been red, but was now dark with age ; chairs, a broad couch or settle, and a centre table, all were covered and hung with the velvet, which appeared to be dropping away. Mrs. Pomeroy saw no signs of haunting apparitions : all that struck her, was the smallness of the room. She remarked upon it.

"The tower walls are thick, madam."

"What is that ?" she asked, as her eye became accustomed to the dark walls. "Why, that is a cloth, a velvet cloth, drawn over one of the panels."

"The picture is underneath," whispered Bridget, in an awe-struck tone—for she had her superstitions, like the rest of them.

"What picture is underneath ?"

"The nun's, madam. She who was said to haunt the room. Would the lady like to look at it ?"

Mrs. Pomeroy signified her assent. Bridget caught up the velvet and held it aside, disclosing a half-length figure, habited as a nun. The face was young, fair, and most lovely ; but a strangely mournful and stern expression sat in the dark blue eyes, which were fixed full on the spectator. The lips were slightly open, and one delicate hand was held up in a warning attitude.

"She is saying 'Beware,'" whispered Bridget, who appeared to be afraid of the picture hearing her.

Mrs. Pomeroy laughed. "I do not hear her," she answered ; "but fancy goes a great way. Beware of what ?"

"It is what she is supposed to be saying, madam, according to the tradition. But why, or to whom she is saying it, has never been decided."

"What is her history ?"

"She lived in the reign of one of the Georges—the first or second, I think," began Bridget, delighted at having to tell the tale. "She was brought up in the convent and had taken the veil, though only seventeen ; when in some way she fell in with him who was then Lord of Pomeroy. It was said to be in the fire, for the convent was partly burnt down, and the nuns had to escape in the night."

"Was it this convent ?—our convent ?" interrupted Mrs. Pomeroy. "That we can see from here ?"

"Yes, madam, this very convent. Though nigh upon a hundred years must have elapsed, the sisters there will tell you tales now that have come down to them of that trying misfortune. This young nun forgot her vows, madam, and ran away with the Lord of Pomeroy, to be his wife. He married her in secret, and he brought her to these rooms in the west wing ; this tower room being hers. The lord doted on her, it is said, and he had this picture taken of her in her convent dress, and hung up here : but, when it was too late,

she found out he had played her false, for he had a wife already, that he was separated from. She went crazed, poor thing, all in one night, and she threw herself out of this very window, and was taken up dead in the court below."

Mrs. Pomeroy looked at the window. "She never could have got through that narrow half casement, Bridget. The other half does not open."

"It is certain that she did, madam: she was young and slight. For years afterwards, during that lord's lifetime, she was seen at this same window on a moonlight night—the moon often shines full on these west tower windows: the lady knows they face the east—her light hair hanging over her neck, and wringing her hands, as it is said she did wring them, before she leaped out. But after the lord died, she never came again—as some say. Others say she did come, and does: my old aunt Naomi for one."

"How is it you are so well acquainted with these old histories?" questioned Mrs. Pomeroy.

"Why, madam, I have known them all my life—at least, since I grew old enough to be trusted. We Rexes know as much of the abbey's secrets and sayings as there is to know."

Perhaps Bridget was a little mistaken there. Mrs. Pomeroy accepted it for truth. She was becoming greatly interested in the story of the poor young nun.

"The prediction is there," resumed Bridget, pointing to the picture. "But you can hardly see it, I think, madam: not to read it. This room is dark in the after part of the day, because the sun goes behind the tower: and it must be set now."

"The prediction?" repeated Mrs. Pomeroy.

"It is the strangest part of the history," continued Bridget. "On the morrow following the accident, when she was lying dead, poor lady, in this very room, the lord saw some lines written on the picture, close to the hand which she is holding up. It was never known who wrote them; some people thought she did, before she took the leap; but the lord knew that the characters were not hers, and they came to be regarded as having been done by supernatural agency. In the earlier part of a bright day they can be read without a light, but not when the room's in the shade. Some few thought they applied to what the lord had done; but it is mostly held and believed that they are to affect a later Pomeroy."

"And what are they?"

"They betoken woe to the house," answered Bridget. "It is to be hoped they'll not be realized for many a generation."

Mrs. Pomeroy had put her face and eyes close to the picture, endeavouring to decipher the lines. But she was unable to do so, though she could discern that some were there.

"The late lord—the one who had done the wrong was his grandfather—put little faith in all this, and I have heard him laugh over

it," re-commenced Bridget; whose tongue, once set going on these topics, would never have ceased of its own accord. "He did not keep the room or the wing shut up, and any of the family could come in who liked, and we had to dust and clean here once or twice a year. He was a rare one for disliking dust and dirt. But ——"

"Stay a moment, Bridget. In saying the late lord, do you mean him who died last?"

"Surely yes, madam. But as I was going to add, the present lord had the whole wing shut up as soon as he came into power. The Pomeroy's are a proud race, the present lord especially is, and they deem the picture a memento of disgrace; a blot on the scutcheon of their ancestors. So the lord keeps the curtain down over it—that the bad lord had put—as his father did before him; and in addition he keeps the room shut and locked, and all the west wing besides."

"But it is going a roundabout way to attain his end," remarked Mrs. Pomeroy. "Why not destroy the picture, and have done with it?—and have the rooms thrown open and embellished. I shall suggest it to the lord."

Bridget shook her head. "Not a Pomeroy dare destroy that picture. An impression has passed down from father to son, since the time of the sinning lord—that whoever does away with the picture, must look out for the cost, for that the fulfilment of the prediction will then be at hand. Whether my lord puts faith in it, madam, I can't say; likely not, for he is one of the boldest of a bold race: but, anyway, he takes care to keep the picture hidden so that no harm can approach it."

"I wish I could see the prediction," cried curious Mrs. Pomeroy, not feeling altogether pleased that Guy should have kept her in the dark as to these matters, have withheld this delightfully marvellous story from her. "Suppose you fetch a candle, Bridget?"

"Will the lady like to remain here alone?" hesitated the servant, halting at the threshold.

The Lady of Pomeroy settled that by motioning the woman to hold back the hangings, and stepping down into the next room. There she took up her station at the open window, and leaned from it, that the evening air might be company until Bridget's return.

As Bridget was going down the stairs of the north tower she met Jerome. "Where do you spring from?" he exclaimed in astonishment.

"The Lady of Pomeroy called me, and I have been into the west tower with her. She ——"

"Don't thee tell lies, girl," interrupted the old man, not believing a word.

"You are polite to-night," returned Bridget: "I have been into the west tower with my lady; into the haunted room. And now I am going to fetch a light that she may see the lines on the nun's picture."

As Jerome slowly took in the sense of the words, his mouth dropped, and his hands were lifted. "In there!" he muttered to himself in consternation. "And the lord said it was never to be opened to her—that she was too young to be frightened with such tales. She found the key, then, after all my excuses! What possessed the other key, I wonder, that I could not get it away from the lock?"

"Why, Jerome," exclaimed the Lady of Pomeroy, "the key you wanted was on the bunch!"

"As I find, madam. Pity I did not look more particularly."

Bridget came back with the light, and they all went into the room. Mrs. Pomeroy took the candle from her hand, and held it close to the lines on the picture. Bridget looked on composedly, and Jerome in abstraction, while she slowly read them.

"When Pomeroy's heir goes forth a wife to win,
And Pomeroy's heir goes forth in vain;
When Pomeroy's lord by a lie doth gain,
Then woe to the Pomeroy's, twain and twain!"

Barely had Mrs. Pomeroy read this when a shriek from Bridget caused her to start back. She had inadvertently held the wax-light too near, for the writing was faint, and had set fire to the picture.

Bridget's screams went on. What with the blaze near to her and what with the superstitious fancies connected with the picture, the ill anticipated upon its destruction, she really could not contain herself. Of a calm, equable nature, she had never in her life been so startled as now; it may be said, so uncontrollably terrified. Combined with the superstitious dread came fears of the abbey's destruction by fire: and while Jerome was quietly putting the flames out, and scorching his poor hands in doing it, Bridget rushed into the next room, flew to the open casement, put forth her head, and shrieked, "Fire! fire!"

She was heard by one of the men, who happened to be in the cloisters below. He, looking the very image of incredulous astonishment, for he knew nothing of this expedition of Mrs. Pomeroy's, alarmed his fellows, and a host of them came running up. Jerome had put out the flames then, and was locking up the haunted room with the remains of the picture within it. Mrs. Pomeroy had come forth, and was standing by the shaking and trembling Bridget.

"How stupid you are, Bridget!" she fractiously said: for when vexed with ourselves, it is satisfactory to find a scapegoat to pitch upon: and the accident had vexed Mrs. Pomeroy very considerably. "It was startling for the minute, of course, but there's no cause for you to shiver and shake like that."

"Madam—I—I beg your pardon. I felt just as if I should die."

"For my part, I think it is as well that the old thing is destroyed," spoke Mrs. Pomeroy, striving to make light of the catastrophe, but in her heart wondering what Guy would say to it, and whether he

would be frightfully angry with her. "The worst is, I can't remember the lines. I wish I could have copied them first."

"Oh, ma'am, I know them by heart," said Bridget. "I can repeat them whenever you wish; or write them out for you."

It was at this juncture that the men got through the west wing, and into this last room. Jerome, trembling nearly as much as Bridget, told them all was safe now, and borrowed a couple of handkerchiefs to wrap round his hands. What fire was it, did they want to know—what was burnt, he added in answer to confused inquiries. Well, it was the picture.

The picture! Not one amongst the lot but started back a step at the ominous word. For in the household of the Lord of Pomeroy, comprising as it did many ancient and attached servitors, the doom, supposed to be hanging over the family, formed a not unfrequent topic of conversation. All had been permitted at some time or another, to steal up to see the nun's picture and read the prediction.

Making way for the Lady of Pomeroy, and bowing as she passed onwards between them, the descent was made in dismayed silence. Only Bridget, who could not possibly lose much time in finding her tongue, lagged behind to exchange whispers with Jerome.

"She'll die in her confinement, Jerome."

"What d'ye say?" returned Jerome, really not understanding.

"I'm afraid she will; our poor lady! She has caused the calamity, you see; and it's well known that whoever should do that would be the one on whom the evil will mostly fall. That's why the lords have taken such care of themselves and never gone anigh the picture."

"I wish my old hands had been burnt right off first, rather than they should have brought out the keys at all," was Jerome's bitter answer.

"Poor thing! Yes, she'll go when her baby is born."

"Nonsense!" irascibly uttered Jerome. "Don't you go and set that other notion agate."

"Talking in confidence to you isn't setting it agate."

"And within the next hour you'll talk of it in confidence to a dozen more! How old are you, Bridget?"

"Thirty last birthday. You know that."

"Yes. And, being thirty, one would ha' thought you might have learnt a little discretion. Die when her baby's born, indeed! You had better let the lord hear you say such a thing."

"I've done no harm: and I'm sure if prayers will ensure her safety, she will have mine. But it's an awful thing to happen!—and especially that it should have been his wife to do it. I thought she was holding the light very close. And now you come into Aunt Rex's parlour, Jerome, and let us see to your hands."

Barely had Mrs. Pomeroy gained her own rooms, when Guy

returned. Anxious about his wife, not caring to leave her at present longer than he could help, he always made a point of returning early. In her heart of hearts, she was somewhat afraid of her husband, knowing how stern he was by nature, and her courage failed her as she prepared to tell her tale. Better that he should hear it from herself than from the household.

"Guy," she whispered, nestling to him as he sat down by her on the sofa, "something very unfortunate has happened, and I want to tell you of it. I have had an accident and done some mischief."

The thought, passing through Guy's mind at this, was that she must have broken some one or other of the costly ornaments he had bought to adorn her sitting-room. Drawing her closer to him, a smile parted his lips as he looked down at her. All he could see was the parting of her bright brown hair, for her face was hidden.

"Dreadful mischief, no doubt," he answered fondly.

"I want you to forgive me for it ; not to be too angry with me."

"I will not be angry with you at all : and I forgive you beforehand. What is it ?"

In a voice that he could hardly hear, she told her tale, holding one of his hands between hers, as if playing with it. How that, sitting alone in the oak room, she had fallen on the wish to see the west wing opposite, and had gone to it with Jerome ; and how that later, wanting to see the picture better and the lines on it, she had told Bridget to bring a candle ; and—and—there she broke into tears.

"And what ?" asked Guy in a low, strange voice, that did not sound like his own.

"Burnt it," she sobbed. "The flame of the candle caught the picture as I held it ; and it blazed up, and burnt."

Not a word spoke Guy. Not a symptom of anger did he betray. His thoughts seemed to be gone a wool-gathering ; his eyes had a far-away look in them.

"Won't you say you forgive me, Guy ? I am so sorry ; so vexed."

"Yes, yes," he answered hastily ; "I said I forgave you beforehand. It does not matter : it cannot be helped. There, there, love ; don't cry. But you should not have gone up there without me."

"And what do you think the prediction meant, Guy ?—something about the Heir of Pomeroy failing to get a bride, and the lord winning one by a lie ?"

"I think nothing," replied Guy in a sharper tone. "But don't go climbing about the abbey again, my dear ; you are not in a fit state for it. As to the picture, it was a memento of a deed which, if tradition may be trusted, was a disgrace to the name of Pomeroy."

(To be continued.)

DREAMS.

A BELIEF, more or less strong, in dreams has belonged to all nations and all times. It forms a distinct thread in the gorgeously varied web of Homer; it has more than one panel to itself in the lively historic carving of Herodotus; it hovers about here and there in the Niebelungen-Lied, and other mediæval stories; it rings in the music of our ballads; it lingers still in the most picturesque folk-lore of rural districts, both at home and abroad.

Nor can we, when we think over the matter, much wonder that this faith is so deeply rooted in the minds of the common people. In the first place, Holy Writ itself seems in a certain way to set its seal on such a belief; and though we, of the higher educated classes, know and teach that since Apostolic times we have no authority for supposing that God yet speaks to man in visions, yet the masses still look upon the subject with an almost reverent eye. Then what strange things these dreams are in themselves. With what almost magic power do they sometimes suddenly call up a scene or place which has been nearly forgotten. What fantastically coloured, grotesquely grouped, unnaturally natural pictures they are of real life. How much there is about them which even the wisest among us can hardly explain. When we consider all this, we can scarcely be surprised that the lively imagination of the common people should still cling to its old faith in dreams.

The most retired country districts are of course the most superstitious on this point. Their thoroughgoing belief in dreams makes it a somewhat nervous matter to spend a week among the worthy folk of Devon and Cornwall. You can never tell at what moment in the day they may pounce down upon your innocent words or deeds to fit upon them a dream they had last night. If you put on your hat on one side, or let drop a tea-spoon, or chance to do anything else in the slightest degree out of the common, they are certain to find in your act an interpretation to some pet vision. "Their dream is out," they cry, in true west-country phrase, and through all the rest of the day they go about with a provokingly self-satisfied air. Other English rural regions have no doubt their legion of remarkable dream superstitions, but commend me to the west-country matron for bringing her visions to bear upon daily prosaic life.

To turn from the lower orders to those above them, we believe that more educated people than like to own it have a certain vague faith in dreams. How many of our friends tell us an ugly dream they have had, with a forced laugh which is very like a groan. How many relate their dreams with the gravity belonging to real facts. How many more never, we suspect, tell them at all, from a secret dislike to

hearing them treated with ridicule. We confess, ourselves, to an eerie feeling sometimes when we suddenly draw near to an object or person which has been with us very vividly in a last night's dream.

Several highly gifted men and women have had a certain faith in dreams. In one of his published letters, Charles Dickens relates a dream he had had, with a seriousness and circumstantiality which reveal plainly enough that, to him, it was no shadow of empty air. We read in Fredrika Bremer's life that she fully believed she should die at a certain age, because she had once dreamt that a departed friend had come to her and told her that in such a year she would be with him. She, however, outlived the appointed date, and thereby perhaps was cured of her belief in dreams.

One of the strangest effects of dreams is, when, as we say or do something, we suddenly have a feeling that we have said or done it before. If we follow back carefully the train of ideas thus called up, we shall find that it originated in some dream we had forgotten, till our present action or thought all at once called it up; but in our first bewilderment the sensation is, for the moment, singular and uncanny enough. We think that from this sort of feeling might first have arisen the creed of the transmigration of souls.

Healthy dreams are usually to be explained by looking back to the past. Dreams are very often an odd jumble of things we said, or did, or thought yesterday, and of things we said, or did, or thought long ago. It is this confusion which makes them sometimes, at first, seem so incomprehensible; but if we patiently trace out every feature in one vivid dream, we find almost to a certainty that it arises from events which have happened in our lives perhaps at different periods. The mind, in sleep, loses all sense of time, and embraces a whole existence at a glance.

In their dreams the most commonplace men and women are poets. The cook dreams that she is in a lovely flower garden, the city clerk that he is a knight at a tournament, the village school-master that he is William the Conqueror. This power of dreams is a sweet and blessed one, for often it is the only ideal gleam which falls upon some hard, grey path of life.

In their dreams all men and women are true, whatever else they may be when they are awake. Could we look into the dreams of the murderer, we should find there beforehand the shadow of his crime. Could we look into the dreams of the silent worker for good, whose deeds of mercy are counted by angels alone of all created beings, we should see there, in its full brightness, the flame of his love to God and man. In her dreams the daintily-dressed, softly-spoken lady of fashion is a strong-tongued virago. In her dreams the demure, over-worked governess is a romping school-girl. In her dreams the nun, whose heart is not in the hair-cloth and the vows, is a radiant coquette. If we could meet one another in dreamland, we should be in a real palace of truth. It was, perhaps,

this fact which gave Madame De Genlis the first idea of her witty, satirical story, "*Le Palais de Vérité*."

Old people often tell us that their dreams generally carry them back to the days of their youth. The old man sees again in his dreams the smile of his mother in her early womanhood, and hears again the brother, from whom he has been long estranged, prattling as a baby at his side, and gallops his pony across country in all the wild joy of a first fox-hunt, and steals a shy kiss from his first love. Thus do dreams come as kindly sprites to the grandfather, dozing in his arm-chair by the fire, when the young ones waltz and flirt and make sweet hay while the sun shines.

Some people are always seeing over and over again in their dreams a certain house, or a certain estate, or a certain landscape. They know every room in the house, even to the pictures on the wall; they could almost draw a map of the estate; the trees in the landscape are as familiar to them as the bushes in their garden, and yet they declare that they never beheld either house, or estate, or landscape, with their waking eyes. This phenomenon seems certainly difficult to explain. We suspect, however, that it usually arises from a mass of indistinct, confused memories of scenes and places the dreamer has once beheld, perhaps in early childhood, but which in his waking moments he has entirely forgotten. We often, too, meet in our dreams people whom we cannot ever remember to have seen when awake. We believe that these mysterious dream acquaintances are, like the houses and the landscapes, made up of dim remembrances of the faces and figures of persons casually seen somewhere by the dreamer when awake. If our theory about this phenomenon in dreams is true, sleep must have the same power of bringing back lost colours to memory, that certain chemicals have of bringing back the colours of the Pompeian frescoes.

When the mind is in a morbid state from disease or over-work, a dream will sometimes produce a most unpleasant feeling of vague discomfort, by first startling us from sleep, and making itself distinctly remembered; and then, as soon as slumber falls again upon the weary senses, flitting away, so that in the morning no trace of it can be recalled. All day the dream hovers about the sickly fancy, never far off, and yet never near enough to be taken hold of. It was surely some such feeling as this which, exaggerated by divine wrath of old, tormented the Babylonian king, and doomed to death all the wise men except the chosen prophet of the Lord.

The dreams we remember, are never dreamt when we are in our deepest sleep, but always a few minutes before we awake, so that outward things often have a considerable influence in producing them. A sudden rheumatic pain in any part of the body will cause a dream of being in prison, with a chain wound around the suffering limb. A loudly moaning wind will bring a dream of plaintive music; and the shaking of the bed by a heavy step in the next room, a dream

about being in a boat. An eminent physician, who was curious concerning dreams, once resolved to try by experiment how far external influences reach the mind in slumber. He put to sleep an old woman with a harmless narcotic, and then began to practise upon her. First he raised her hands and clasped them. At once the corners of her mouth were drawn down, her face was puckered up and she uttered a low groan; the old lady was evidently dreaming that she was in chapel. Next he laid her hands again on her lap, and gently pulled open her mouth; the lips immediately adapted themselves to a smile, and the whole face grew bright and cheery. The old lady was certainly having now a funny dream. Last of all he hummed loudly a merry tune close to her ear; the old lady's feet began to jig, and she woke talking about the fiddlers.

Animals dream as well as men. Watch a dog in his sleep; his paws twitch, and his mobile tail stirs gently. No doubt he is again welcoming home his master, and enjoying it quite as much as he did when he was awake. Before long he gives a muffled bark, or growl; now he is in fancy driving some intruder off his domain, or threatening the life of a phantom rabbit. Surely this capacity of dreaming shows more power of thought in animals than they are generally accredited with by man.

There are some very precious dreams; the dreams which bring back to us the loved and lost; not as pale ghosts, but with all the warm colour of life in their cheeks, with the old light of tenderness in their eyes, and the old chime of mirth in their voices. They sit by us in the summer twilight, they wander with us through the spring fields, they share our household pleasures, they weep when we are sad. Till we meet them again in Heaven, may we often meet them in such dreams as these.

Notwithstanding all we have said to weaken faith in dreams, we have ourselves known a few instances in which a dream has seemed in truth a providential interposition. We will conclude this paper by relating two of them, which are facts.

One winter evening about fifty years ago, a post-chaise, with a single gentleman inside it, drove up to the little inn on the Pentland Frith, in the north of Scotland, where passengers who were going to cross to the Orkneys usually spent the night. The gentleman, whom we will call Mr. Mac T., was the owner of a large estate, and an old house which had belonged to his family for hundreds of years, in the Mainland, or chief of the Orkney Islands, and was now about to visit his property. It was a blustering, stormy night, but that only made more pleasant the cigar and the glass of whiskey, and the crackling wood-fire by which Mac T. sat chatting with the landlord, who was an old friend both of his father and himself, and who was proud of entertaining the "young laird," as he called him, with his wildest tales of adventure on the sea. They did not, however, sit late, for the Orkney packet sailed very early in the morning, and

Mac T. soon found himself in his cosy well-appointed little bedroom. The wind was chanting a grand Berserker melody, and the sea was roaring a deep bass accompaniment. Mac T. loved those sounds, for they had often been the lullaby of his childhood, and soon fell asleep.

For some hours he slept without an image or a thought reaching his mind; but at length, when the morning was glimmering grey in the east, a strange dream came to trouble him. He dreamt that he was in the ancient banquetting hall of his old house, in the Mainland, sitting at the head of a very long table. The banquetting hall was now in reality almost a ruin, but in his dream, Mac T. saw it hung with tapestry, and blazing with a hundred lights. The table was well filled on both sides, and he thought he glanced curiously down its length to see who his guests were. As he looked he shuddered in his dream. Those who sat at table with him were all his dead ancestors for many generations back. He knew their faces and dresses well from their portraits in the picture gallery. Next to him sat his own father, who had died about a year before. And at the bottom of the table sat a fair-haired man in a dress of skins, who was a Norse chieftain, the founder of the family. It seemed to him that he sat for some minutes as if spell-bound, while the spectres murmured together in low, hollow tones. At length they all rose, and slowly, one by one, in turns, left the hall. But before they went, each one paused at the door, and turning, raised his hand in a warning attitude, fixed his eyes on Mac T., and said in a deep voice, the word "Beware."

"The packet starts in twenty minutes, sir," cried a loud voice at the door, rousing Mac T. suddenly from sleep. Confused at first, yet soon remembering where he was, he sprang out of bed and began hurriedly to dress himself. Being a bad sailor, his first glance was naturally enough at the sea, close to which the inn stood. The wind had risen in the night. The waves thundered on the shore, and the little Orkney packet was tossing up and down like a limpet shell. As he gazed, his strange dream rose up with sudden distinctness before Mac T.'s mind. He was infected with a good deal of thorough Scotch superstition. Besides he did not much like the look of the sea, and so he resolved not to go till to-morrow. That day the Orkney packet was lost with every man on board, and Mac T. and his little wife, who was left at home with the babies, had to thank that warning dream for his life.

The other instance we have to tell is quite as singular. Many years ago the Rev. Mr. N. held a small living in the wildest part of west Somerset. The parish church stood on a bleak hill-side, and Mr. N., who was a bachelor, lodged in the farm-house close to it. Among his small flock there was no one in whom the clergyman took more interest than in Mary, the pretty daughter of the farmer, his landlord. When Mary was about twenty, Mr. N. was much troubled

by finding that she had formed an attachment with Jack Townsend, the cleverest workman and the most worthless fellow on the farm.

One autumn night the clergyman dreamt that Mary stood at his bedside and cried out in an imploring voice, "Come out on to the hill-side." The impression left on his mind on waking was so distinct that, if he had not known his door was locked, so that no one could enter the room, he would have thought Mary must in reality have been there. Feeling however sure that it was only a dream, he composed himself once more to sleep. But scarcely had he closed his eyes when Mary was again there, calling to him to come out on to the hill-side. Seven several times he tried to sleep, and seven times the phantom came back, always with the same cry.

At length, mastered by an almost irresistible impulse, he rose, dressed himself, and went out on the hill. He walked some distance, but could see nothing except the heather-bells waving in the moon-light; could hear nothing but a distant sheep-bell tinkling softly, and the stream warbling below in the valley. He was just going back, when suddenly a shrill cry reached him, seeming to come from a neighbouring combe. Hurrying in that direction, he saw at the bottom of the combe two figures, those of a man and a woman, apparently struggling with each other. As he drew near, the man ran away and the woman fell to the ground. When he came up he found that it was Mary. She had only fainted, and he soon brought her to herself. Then by degrees she confessed to him that her lover had persuaded her to meet him that night in the combe, bringing with her a small sum of money which she had saved from early childhood by laying by little gifts of friends and relations, and which according to the custom common among her class in that day, she had kept in an old stocking instead of in the bank. Townsend had promised to elope with her, and marry her, and as she loved him, and her father would not allow the match, she had consented to go. But when he met her, Townsend, instead of going away with her, had tried to rob her of her money. She had resisted, and struggled with him, and just then the clergyman had come up and the villain had run away. After that night Mr. N. was a believer in the providential nature of dreams.

When we know of such instances as these, it is of course impossible to treat dreams with utter carelessness. But a constant belief in them engenders quickly a morbid frame of mind, and a man or woman had far better trust to keen-sighted prudence, and vigilant common sense as prophets of the future, than to all the dreams which fill with rainbow-tinted phantoms the dusky kingdom of the night.

ALICE KING.

THE LAST OF THE CAROMELS.

WHEN a house is popularly allowed to be haunted, and its inmates get thin and white and restless, it is not the best place in the world for children: and this was supposed by Church Dykely to be the reason why Mrs. Nash Caromel the Second had never allowed her child to come home since the death of its father. At first it was said that she would not risk having him lest he should catch the fever Nash had died of: but, when the weeks went on, and the months went on, and still the child was kept away, people put it down to the other disagreeable fact.

Anyway, Mrs. Nash Caromel—or Charlotte Nave, as you please—did not have the boy home. Little Dun was kept at his grandfather's, Lawyer Nave; and Miss Harriet Nave took care of him: the other sister, Gwinny, remaining at Caromel's Farm. Towards the close of spring, when Dun was about two years old, he caught the whooping cough and had it badly. In August he was sent for change of air to a farm called the Rill, on the other side Pershore, Miss Harriet Nave taking the opportunity to go jaunting off elsewhere. The change of air did the child good, and he was getting strong quickly, when one night early in September croup attacked him, and he lay in great danger. News of it was sent to his mother in the morning. It drove her nearly wild with fear, and she set off for the Rill in a gig, her father driving it. So rare was the sight of her now, for she stuck indoors at Caromel's Farm as a snail sticks to its shell, that Church Dykely thought it an event, and talked of it all the day.

They got to the Rill—which lay across country, somewhere between Pershore and Wyre—in the course of the morning, and found little Dun gasping with his croup, and inhaling steam from a kettle. Moore told us there was nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream; but to Charlotte Nave, otherwise Caromel, there was nothing sweet at all except this little Dun. He was the light of her existence; the apple of her eye—to put it poetically. She sat by the bed-side, her pale face (so pale and thin to what it used to be) bent lovingly upon him, and wiping away the tears by stealth that came into her eyes. In the afternoon Dun was better; but the doctor would not say he was out of danger.

"If I could but stay here for the night! I can't bear to leave him," Charlotte snatched an opportunity to say to her father, when their friends, the farmer and his wife, were momentarily occupied.

"But you can't, you know," returned Lawyer Nave. "You must be home by sunset."

"By sunset? Nay, an hour after that would do."

"No, it will not do. Better be on the safe side."

"It seems *cruel* that I should have to leave him," she exclaimed, with a sob.

"Nonsense, Charlotte! The child will do as well without you as with you. You may see for yourself how much better he is. The farm cannot be left to itself at nights; remember that. We must start in half-an-hour."

No more was said. Nave went to see about the getting ready of the gig; Charlotte, all down in the dumps, stayed with the little lad, and let him pull about as he would her golden hair, and drank her tea by his side. Mr. and Mrs. Smith (good hospitable people, who had stood by Charlotte Nave through good report and ill report, believing no ill of her) pressed her to stay all night, promising, however, that every care should be taken of Duncan, if she did not.

"My little darling must be a good child and keep warm in bed, and when mamma comes in the morning he will be nearly well," breathed Charlotte, showering tears and kisses upon him when the last moment had come. And, with that, she tore herself away.

"Such a pity that you should have to go!" said Mrs. Smith, stepping to the door with her. "I think Gwendolen and old Grizzel might ha' been left for one night: they'd not ha' run away, nor the house neither. Come over as soon as you can in the morning, my dear; and see if you can't make arrangements to stay a day or two."

They were starting from the back door, as being the nearest and handiest; Nave, already in the gig, seemed in a rare hurry to get off. Mr. Smith helped Charlotte up; and away the lawyer drove, across the fold-yard, one of the farm-boys holding the outer gate open for them. The sun, getting down in the west, shone right in their eyes.

"Oh, dear, I have left my parasol!" cried Charlotte, just as they got to the gate. "I must have it: my blue parasol!" And Nave, giving an angry word to parasols in general, pulled the horse shortly up.

"You need not get out, hindering time!" growled he. "Call out for it. Here, Smith! Mrs. Caromel has forgotten her blue parasol."

"I'll run for it, ma'am," said the lad. Which he set off to do; leaving the gate to itself. Charlotte, who had been rising to get out, looked back to watch him; the lawyer looked back to shout again, in his impatience, to Mr. Smith. Their faces were both turned from the side where the gate was, and they did not see what was about to happen.

The gate, swinging slowly and noiselessly forward, touched the half-turned horse, which had been standing sideways, his head thrown out to see what the stoppage might be about.

Touched him, and startled him. Bounding upwards, he tore

forward down the narrow lane on which the gate opened ; tried to scale a bank, upset the gig, and pitched the lawyer and Charlotte out of it.

The farmer, and as many of his people as could be gathered at the moment, came running down, some of them armed with pitchforks. Nave was groaning as he lay ; Charlotte was insensible. Just at first they thought her dead. Both were carried back to the Rill on hurdles, and the doctor was sent for. Mr. Smith started off a man on horseback to tell the ill-news of the accident at Caromel's Farm.

Ill-news. No doubt a bad and distressing accident. But now, see how curiously the "power that shapes our ends" brings things about. But for that accident, the mystery and the wrong being played out at Caromel's Farm, might never have had daylight thrown upon it. The accident, like a great many other accidents, had been sent to this wise and good end. At least, so far as we, poor blind mortals that we all are, down here, might presume to judge.

The horseman, clattering in at his hard pace to Caromel's Farm, delivered to Miss Gwendolen Nave, and to Grizzel, the old family servant, the tidings he was charged with—improving upon them as a thing of course.

Lawyer Nave, he were groaning awful, all a bleeding, and unable to move a limb. The young lady, she were dead ; leastways, looked like it.

With a scream and a cry, Gwendolen gave orders for her own departure. Seeking the bailiff, she bade him drive her in the tax-cart, there being no second gig.

"Now mind, Grizzel," she said, laying hold of the old woman's arm after flinging on her bonnet and shawl any how, "you will lock all the doors as soon as I am gone, and take out the keys. Do you hear ?"

"I hear, Miss Gwinny. My will's good to do it : you know that."

"Take care that you *do* do it."

Fine tidings to go flying about Church Dykely in the evening twilight ! Lawyer Nave (Nave by name, and knave by nature) half killed, his daughter quite. The news reached us at Dyke Manor : and Squire Todhetley, though holding Caromel's Farm in little estimation, thought it but neighbourly to walk over there and enquire how much was true, how much not.

You have not forgotten their history. How Nash Caromel married Charlotte Nave, not knowing but that his first wife, Charlotte Tinkle, was alive (in fact, believing in his heart she *was*) ; and how, when Charlotte Tinkle arrived from California in the course of a year or two, Nash died of the bother and of an attack of fever. People said he could not rest in his grave, some professed to have seen him. The latest of them was the Squire : as we were leaving the farm this

evening after making enquiries of old Grizzel. You remember what was said—that in bolting through the gate between the dark, overhanging trees, the Squire found himself in contact with Dobbs the blacksmith. Dobbs standing on the watch, in a stealthy, mysterious manner, without his boots.

"But what on earth are you here for, Dobbs?" reiterated the Squire. "Where are your boots?"

And all Dobbs did for answer, was to lay his hand respectfully on the Squire's coat-sleeve to begin with, so as to prevent his running away. Then he entered upon his whispered tale. Leaning our arms upon the low gate, we listened to it, and to the curious sound of weeping and wailing that stole faintly on our ears from amongst the garden trees. The scene altogether looked weird enough in the moonlight.

Dobbs, naturally an unbeliever in ghosts, had grown to think that this was no ghost at all, but somebody got up to resemble one by Caromel's Farm, for some mysterious purpose of its own. Remembering his attack of fright, and resenting it excessively, Dobbs determined if possible to unearth the secret: and this was the third night he had come upon the watch.

"But why stand without your boots?" whispered the Squire, who could not get over the shoeless feet.

"That I may make no noise in running to pounce upon him, sir," whispered back Dobbs. "I take 'em off and hide 'em in the copse behind here."

"Pounce upon whom?" demanded the Squire. "Can't you speak plainly?"

"That's what I'd like to know," breathed Dobbs. "I feel nearly sure, Squire, that the—the thing looking like Nash Caromel is not Nash Caromel. Nor his ghost, either."

"I never saw two faces more alike, and I've just seen it now," put in the Squire. "At least, as much as a shadow can look like a face."

"Ay," assented Dobbs. "I'm as sure, sir, as I am of my own forge, that it's a likeness got up by Nave to scare us. And I'll eat the forge," added Dobbs with emphasis, "if there's not something worse than ghosts at Caromel's Farm—though I can't guess what it is."

"What a villain he must be—and Nave, too!" cried the Pater, rubbing his red nose. "But, look here, Dobbs—how could any man put on the face of Nash Caromel?"

"I don't know how he does it, Squire, or what he does, but I'm good to find out. And if—just hark there again, sirs!"

The same faint sounds of wailing, of entreaty in a woman's voice, rose again upon the air. Dobbs, with a gesture to ask for strict silence, went noiselessly down the dark path in his brown woollen stockings, that looked thick enough for boots. Tod, eager for any

adventure, stole after him, and I brought up the rear. The Pater remained where he was, and held the gate open, expecting perhaps that we might want to make a rush through it as he had just done.

Two minutes more, and the mystery was solved. Near the house, under the shade of the closely intersecting trees, stood old Grizzel and the figure people had taken to be the ghost of Nash Caromel. It was Grizzel's voice we heard, full of piteous entreaty to him not to do something.

"Just for this night, master, for the love of heaven! Don't do it, just this night that I'm left in charge! They've trusted me, you see!"

The words seemed to make no impression. Pushing her hands back, the figure was turning impatiently away, when Dobbs seized upon it.

But, in sheer astonishment at seeing us, perhaps in terror, Dobbs let go again to step backwards; and the prize might have escaped but for the strong arms of Tod. It was indeed Nash Caromel. Not his ghost. Himself.

Nash Caromel worn to the veriest shadow mortal eyes ever gazed at. The Squire came up, and we all went into the house together.

Nash had not died. When the fever, of which it was feared he would die, gained its crisis, he awoke to life, not to death. But, terrified at his position—the warrant, applied for by Henry Tinkle, being out against him—overwhelmed with a sense of shame, he had feigned death as the only chance of escaping disgrace and trouble and punishment. The first thought perhaps was Nave's—or his and his daughter's combined. They wanted to keep the income, you see. Any way, they carried the thought out, and had successfully contrived to deceive doctors, undertakers, and the world. Nash, weak as a rat, had got out of bed to watch his own funeral procession down the avenue.

And there, in the upper rooms of the house he had since lived until now, old Grizzel sharing the secret. But a grievous complaint, partly brought on by uneasiness of mind, partly inherited from his father, who had died of it, had speedily attacked Nash, one for which there was no cure. It had worn him to a shadow.

He had walked in the garden sometimes. He had come out walking sometimes at night, had now and then crossed over to the thick copse, simply because to live entirely without fresh air, to stay inactive indoors, was intolerable to him. His wife and her sister did their best to prevent it. Nave came in the day time and would blow him up by the hour together; but they could not always keep him in. At last they grew alarmed. For, when they attempted to use force, by locking the doors, he told them that unless he was allowed his way in this, he would declare himself to the world. Life could not have been a bed of roses for any of them.

To look at him, as he sat there to-night by the kitchen fire, his cheeks white and hollow, his sunken eyes encased in dark rims, and his thin lips on the shiver, you'd hardly have given him a week of life. A great pity sat in the blacksmith's face.

"Don't reproach yourself, Dobbs: it's the best thing that could have happened to me," spoke Nash Caromel kindly. "I am not sure but I should have gone out this night and declared myself. Grizzel thought it, and put herself into a whirlwind of fear. Nobody but myself knows the yearning to do it that has been upon me. You won't go and tell it out in the market-place, will you, Dobbs?"

"I'll not tell on't to a single soul, sir," said Dobbs, earnestly. "Nobody shall know on't from me. And I'm as glad as glad can be that you be alive and did not die in that fever."

"We are all safe and sure, Caromel; not a hint shall escape us," spoke the Squire from the midst of his astonishment. "The first thing must be to get Duffham here."

"Duffham can't do any good; things have gone too far with me," said poor Nash. "Once this disorder lays regular hold of a man, there's no hope for him: you know that, Todhetley."

"Stuff!" said the Pater. "I don't believe it has gone too far, only you've got moped here and think so. We'll have Duffham here at once. You boys can go for him."

"No," dissented Caromel. "Duffham may tell the tale abroad. I'd rather die in peace, if I can."

"Not he. Duffham! Why, you ought to know him better. Duffham will be as secret as ourselves. Come, be off, lads: and, mind, we trust *you*."

Nash Caromel sighed and said no more. He had been wanting badly enough to see a friend or two, but not to be shown up to the parish. We went out with Dobbs.

This discovery might not have supervened, I take it, had Charlotte Nave and the lawyer not been upset in the gig. They would have stood persistently in his light—perhaps have succeeded in locking him in by force! As it was, we had it all our own way.

"How could you lend yourself to so infamous a deception?" cried the Squire to old Grizzel, following her into the pantry to ask it, when she returned from bolting the door after us. "I'm not at all sure that you could not be punished for it. It's—it's a conspiracy. And you, of all people, old Grizzel, to forget the honour of the Caromels! Why! you lived with his father!—and with his brother. All these years!"

"And how could I tell again him when they asked me not?" contended Grizzel, the tears dropping on to a tin saucepan she was rubbing out. "Master Nash was as dear to me as the others were. Could it be me to speak up and say he was not in the coffin, but only old things to make up weight? Could it be me to tell he was

alive and hiding up aloft here, and so get him put in prison? No, sir; the good name of the Caromels was much to me, but Master Nash was more."

"Now, come, old woman, where's the good of crying like that? Well, yes; you have been faithful, and it's a great virtue. And—and there's a shilling or two for you."

"Have you been blowing her up?" asked Nash, as the Squire went back to him, and sat down on the other side the wide kitchen hearth, the fire throwing its glow upon the shining bricks, square and red, and upon Nash Caromel's wan face, in which it was not very difficult to read death. He had put his out-of-door coat off, a long brown garment, and sat in a grey suit. The Squire's belief was that he'd not have minded getting into the fire itself; he sat there shivering and shaking, and seeming to have no warmth left in him.

"I have," said the Squire in answer. "Told her she did not show much regard for the honour of the family—lending herself to such a deception!"

"Poor old Grizzel!" sighed Nash, with a half smile. "She has lived upon thorns, fearing I should be discovered. As to the family honour, Todhetley, the less said about that the better."

"How *could* you do it, Caromel?"

"I don't know," answered Nash with apathy, bringing his face closer to the blaze. "I let it be done, more than did it. All I did, or could do, was just to lie still in my bed. The fever had left me weaker than a child. And, when I got stronger—what was done could not be undone. Not that I seek to defend or excuse myself. Don't think that."

"And, in the name of all that's marvellous, what could have put such a monstrous idea into your heads?" demanded the Squire, getting up to pace the kitchen.

"Well, I have always fancied that business at Sandstone Torr did," replied Nash, who had no idea of reticence now, but spoke out as freely as you please. "It had come to light, you know, not long before. Stephen Radcliffe had hidden his brother in the old tower, passing him off to the world as dead; and so, I suppose, it was thought that I could be hidden and passed off as dead."

"But Stephen Radcliffe never got up a mock funeral. His tale was, that Frank had died in London. You were bold people. What will Parson Holland say, when he comes to learn that he read the burial service over a box of rubbish?"

"I don't know," was the helpless reiteration of poor Nash. "The trouble and worry of it altogether, the discomforts of my position, the constant, never-ceasing dread of discovery have—have been to me what you cannot realise. But for going out of the house at night and striding about in the fresh, free air, I should have become mad. It was a *taste* of freedom. Neither could I always confine myself to

the walks of the garden ; whether I would or not, my feet would carry me beyond it and into the shaded copse."

"Frightening people that met you !"

"When I heard footsteps approach I hid myself—though not always quite in time. I was more put out at meeting people than they were at meeting me."

"I wonder your keepers here ever let you get out !" cried the Squire, musingly.

"They tried hard to keep me in : and generally succeeded. It was only by fits and starts I gained my way."

But the Squire did not get over the discovery. He strode about the large kitchen, rubbing his face, giving out sundry Bless my hearts ! at intervals. The return to life of Charlotte Tinkle had been marvellous enough, but it was nothing to this.

Meanwhile we were on our road to Duffham. Leaving Dobbs at his own forge, we rushed on, and found the doctor in his little parlour at supper ; pickled eels and bread and cheese : the eels in the wide stone jar they were baked in—which was Nomy's way of serving pickled fish.

"Will you sit down and take some ?" asked Duffham, pointing to the jar. Out of which he took the pieces with a fork as he wanted them.

"I'd like to, but there's no time for it," answered Tod, eyeing the jar wishfully. Pickled eels are a favourite dish in our parts : and you don't often eat anything as good.

"Look here, Duffham," he went on : "we want you to go with us and see—see somebody : and to undertake not to tell tales out of school. The Squire has answered for it that you will not."

"See who ?" asked Duffham, going on with his supper.

"A ghost," said Tod, grimly. "A dead man."

"What good can I do *them* ?"

"Well, the man has come to life again. Not for long, though, I should say, judging by his looks. You are not to go and tell of it, mind."

"Tell what ?"

"That he is alive, instead of being, as is supposed, under a grave-stone in yonder churchyard. I am not sure but that you went to his funeral."

Tod's significant tone, half serious, half mocking, attracted Duffham's curiosity more even than the words. But he still went on with his eels.

"Who is it ?"

"Nash Caromel. There. Don't fall off in a faint. Caromel has come to life."

Down went Duffham's fork. "Why—what on earth do you mean ?"

"It is not a joke," said Tod. "Nash Caromel has been alive all

this while, concealed in his house—just as Francis Radcliffe was concealed in the tower. The Squire is with him now—and he is very ill.”

Duffham appealed to me. “Is this true, Johnny Ludlow?”

“Yes, sir, it is. We found him out to-night. He looks as if he were dying. Dobbs is sure he is.”

Leaving his eels now, calling out to old Nomy that she might take away the supper, Duffham came off with us at once. Dobbs ran up as we passed his forge, and went with us to the turning, talking eagerly.

“If you can cure him, Mr. Duffham, sir, I should take it as a great favour, like, showed to myself. I’d not have pounced upon him for all the world, to give him pain, in the state he’s in. You never saw anybody look more like dying.”

They were in the kitchen still, when Grizzel opened the door to us, the fire bigger and hotter than ever. The first thing Duffham did was to order Caromel to bed, and to have a good fire lighted in his room.

But there was no hope for Nash Caromel. The Squire told us so, going home that night. Duffham thought about ten days more would see the end of him.

“And how have things gone during my short absence, Grizzel?” demanded Miss Gwinny Nave alighting from the tax-cart the following morning, upon her return to Caromel’s Farm.

“Oh, pretty well,” answered Grizzel, who in her heart detested Miss Gwinny and all the Naves. “The master seems weaker. He have took to his bed, and got a fire in his room.”

“When did he do that?”

“He come down last night after you went, Miss Gwinny, and sat over this here kitchen fire for ever so long. Then he went up to bed, and I lighted him a fire and took him up some hot arrowroot with a wine glass o’ brandy in it. Shivering with cold, he was.”

“And he has not got up this morning?”

“No; and he says he does not mean to get up. ‘I’ve taken to my bed for good, Grizzel,’ he says to me this morning when I went in to light the fire again and see what he’d eat for breakfast. And I think he has, Miss Gwinny.”

Which information considerably lightened the doubt that was tormenting Miss Nave’s mind. She wanted, oh how badly, and *was* wanted, to remain at the Rill, being sorely needed there; but she had not seen her way clear to do it. If Nash was indeed confined to his bed, she might perhaps venture to leave him for a day or two to Grizzel. But, don’t think old Grizzel mean for keeping in what had taken place: she was only obeying orders. Duffham and the Squire had laid their heads together and then talked to Caromel; and it was agreed that for the present nothing should be disclosed.

"And what news have you brought from the Rill, ma'am?" questioned Grizzel, who was making a custard pudding at the kitchen table. "I hope you found things better than you feared."

"They could not well be worse," sighed Miss Gwinny, untying her bonnet. She had not the beauty of Charlotte. Her light complexion was like brick-dust, and her hair was straw-coloured. Not but what she was proud of her hair, wearing it in twists, with one ringlet trailing over the left shoulder. "Your mistress lies unconscious still; it is feared the brain is injured; and papa's leg is broken in two places."

"Alack a-day!" cried Grizzel, lifting her hands in consternation. "Oh, but I'm sorry to hear it, Miss Gwendolen! And the pretty little boy?"

Miss Gwendolen shook her head. "The croup came on again last night worse than ever," she said, with a rising sob. "They don't know whether they will save him."

Grizzel brushed away some tears as she began to beat up her eggs. She was a tender-hearted old thing, and loved little Dun. Miss Nave put aside her bonnet and shawl, and turned to the staircase to pay a visit to Nash. But she looked back to ask a question.

"Then, I am to understand that you had no trouble with the master last night, Grizzel? He did not want to force himself out?"

"The time for that has gone by, ma'am, I think," answered Grizzel, evasively, not daring and not wishing to confess that he had forced himself out, and what the consequences were. "He seems a deal weaker to-day, Miss Gwinny, than I've ever seen him."

And when Miss Gwinny got into Nash's room she found the words true. Weak, inert, fading, there lay poor Nash. With the discovery, all struggle had ceased; and it is well known that to resign oneself to weakness quietly, makes weakness ten times more apparent. One thing struck her greatly: the hollow sound in the voice. Had it come on suddenly? If not, how was it she had never noticed it before? Struck her with a sort of unpleasant chill: for she believed that peculiar hollowness is generally the precursor of death.

"You are feeling worse, Nash, Grizzel says," she observed; and she thought she had never seen him looking half so ill.

"Oh, I am all right, Gwendolen," answered he. "What of Charlotte and the child?"

Sitting down on the edge of the large bed, Gwendolen told him all there was to tell. Her papa would get well in time, though he could not be moved yet awhile; but Charlotte and the child were lying in extreme danger.

"Dear me! dear me!" he said, and began to cry, as Grizzel had begun. When a man is reduced, as Nash was, faint in mind and in body, the tears are apt to lie near the eyes.

"And there's nobody to attend upon them but Mrs. Smith and her maids—two of the stupidest country wenches you ever saw,"

said Gwendolen. "I did not know how to come away this morning. The child is more than one person's work."

"Why did you come?"

"Because I could not trust you; you know that, Nash. You want to be up to your tricks too often."

"My tricks?"

"Yes. The going out of doors at night. I'm sure it is a dreadful responsibility that's thrown upon me. And all for your own sake!"

"You need no longer fear that—if you call my going out the responsibility. I shall never get out of this bed again, Gwinny."

"What makes you think so?"

"Look at me," answered Nash. "See if you think it likely. I do not."

She shook her head doubtfully. He certainly did look too ill to stir—but she remembered the trouble there had been with him; the fierce, wild yearning for exit, that could not be controlled.

"Are you not satisfied? Listen then: I give you my solemn word of honour not to go out of doors; not to attempt to do so. You must go back to Charlotte and the boy."

"I'll see later," decided Gwinny. "I shall stay here till the afternoon, at any rate."

And when the afternoon came she took her departure for the Rill. Convinced by Nash's state that he could not quit his bed, and satisfied at length by his own solemn and repeated assurances that he would not, Gwinny Nave consigned him to the care of Grizzel, and quitted Caromel's Farm.

Which left the field open again, you perceive. And the Squire and Duffham were there that evening, as they had been on the previous one.

It was a curious time—the few days that ensued. Gwendolen Nave came over for an hour or two every other day, but otherwise Caromel's Farm was a free house. Her doubts and fears were gone, for Nash grew worse very rapidly; and, though he sat up in the room sometimes, could not have got down stairs though the house were burning—as Grizzel put it. And he seemed so calm, so tranquil, so entirely passive under his affliction, so resigned to his enfeebled state, so averse to make any exertion of any kind, that Miss Gwinny could not have felt much easier had he been in the burial ground where Church Dykely took him to be.

What with his past incarceration, which had endured twelve months, and what with the approach of death, which he had seen looming for pretty nearly half that time, Nash Caromel's conscience had come back to him. It was pricking him in more corners than in. As his love for Charlotte Nave weakened—and it had been lying down a long time, for he saw what the Naves were now, and what they had done for him—his love for Charlotte Tinkle came back, and he began to wish he could set wrongs to rights. That

never could be done ; he had put it out of his power ; but he meant to make some little reparation, opportunity being allowed him.

"I want to make a will, Todhetley," he said one evening to the Squire, as he sat by the fire, dressed, a huge carriage-rug thrown on his knees for warmth. "I wonder if my lawyer could be induced to come to me?"

"Do you mean Nave?" retorted the Squire, who could not for the life of him help having a fling at Caromel once in a way. "He has been your lawyer of late years."

"You know I don't mean Nave; and if I did mean him he could not come," said poor Nash. "I mean our family lawyer, Crow. Since I discarded him for Nave he has turned the cold shoulder upon me. When I've met him in the street at Evesham, he has either passed me with a curt nod or looked another way. I would rather have Crow than anybody, for he'd be true, I know, if he could be induced to come."

"I'll see about it," said the Squire.

"And you'll be executor, won't you, Todhetley? You and Duffham."

"No," said the Squire. "And what sort of a will are you going to make?"

"I should like to be just," sighed Nash. "As just as I know how. As just as I can be under the unfortunate circumstances I am placed in."

"That you have placed yourself in, Caromel."

"True. I think of it night and day. But she ought to be provided for. And there's the boy!"

"Who ought to be?"

"My second wife."

"I don't say to the contrary. But there is somebody else, who has a greater and prior claim upon you."

"I know. My heart would be good to leave her all. But that would hardly be just. Poor Charlotte! how patient she has been!"

"Ah, you threw off a good woman when you threw her off. And when you made that other infamous will, leaving her name out of it——"

"It was Nave made it," interrupted Nash, as hotly as his wasted condition allowed him to speak. "He got another lawyer to draw it up, for look's sake—but he virtually made it. And, Todhetley, I must—I *must* get another one made," he added, getting more excited; "and there's no time to be lost. If I die to-night that will would have to stand."

With the morning light the Squire went off to Evesham, driving Bob and Blister, and saw the lawyer, Crow—an old gentleman with a bald head. The two were shut up in a private room, and it seemed as if they never meant to come out again.

First of all, old Crow had to recover his astonishment at hearing

Nash Caromel was living, and that took him some time ; next he had to get over his refusal to act again for Nash, and that took him longer.

"Mind," said he at last, "if I do consent to act—to see the man and make his will—it will be done out of the respect I bore his father and his brother, and because I don't like to stand in the way of an act of justice. Mrs. Nash Caromel was here yesterday——"

"Mrs. Nash Caromel!" interrupted the Squire, in a puzzle, for his thoughts had run over to Charlotte Nave. Which must have been very foolish, seeing she was in bed with a damaged head.

"I speak of his wife," said the old gentleman, loftily. "I have never called any other woman Mrs. Nash Caromel. Her uncle, Tinkle, of Inkberrow, called about the transfer of some of his funded property, and she was with him. I respect that young woman, Squire Todhetley."

"Ay, to be sure. So do I. Well, now, you will let me drive you back this afternoon, and you'll take dinner with me, and we'll go to Caromel's Farm afterwards. We never venture thither before night ; that Miss Gwinny Nave makes her appearance sometimes in the day-time."

"It must be late in the afternoon then," said the lawyer, rather crossly—for he did not enter into the business with a good grace yet.

"All the same to me," acquiesced the Pater, pleased at having got his consent on any terms.

And when the Squire drove in that evening just at the dinner-hour and brought Lawyer Crow with him, we wondered what was agate. Old Jacobson, who had called in and been invited to stay by the Mater, was as curious as anything over it, and asked the Squire, aside, what he was up to, that he must employ a strange man.

And the will Nash Caromel wished to make was accomplished, signed and sealed, himself and this said Evesham lawyer being alone privy to its contents. Dobbs the blacksmith was fetched in, and he and Grizzel witnessed it.

And, as if Nash Caromel had only lived to make the will, he went galloping on to death at railroad speed directly it was done. A change took place in him during that same night. His bell rang for Grizzel, and the old woman thought him dying.

But he rallied a bit the next day : and when the Squire got there in the evening, he was sitting up by the fire, dressed. And terribly uneasy.

"I want to see her," he began, before the Pater had time to say, How are you, or How are you not. "I can't die in peace, unless I see her. And it will not be long first now. I am a bit better, but I thought I was dying in the night : has Grizzel told you ?"

The Pater nodded in silence. He was struck with the change in Nash.

"Who is it you want to see? Charlotte Tinkle?"

"Ay, you've guessed it. 'Twasn't hard to guess, was it? I want to see her, Todhetley. I know she'd come."

Little doubt of that. Had Nash wanted her to visit him in the midst of a fiery furnace, she'd have rushed into it headlong.

But there were difficulties. Charlotte Tinkle was not one of your strong-minded women who are born without nerves; and to tell her that Nash Caromel was alive and not dead might send her into hysterics for a week. And, besides, Harry Tinkle was Nash Caromel's bitter enemy: if he learnt the truth, he might be for handing him over, dying or living, to old Jones the constable.

"I don't see how she is to be got here, and that's the truth, Caromel," spoke the Squire, awaking from his reverie. "It's not a thing I should like to undertake.—Here comes Duffham."

"I know what you are thinking of—Harry Tinkle," returned Nash, as Duffham felt his pulse. "When I was supposed to have died, balking him of his revenge, he grew mad with rage. For a month after, he abused me to everybody he met in the most atrocious terms: in public rooms, in ——"

"Who told you that?" interrupted the Squire. "Nave?"

"Nave. I saw no one else to tell me." Duffham laughed.

"Then it was just as false as Nave is. You might have known Harry Tinkle better."

"Well, I suppose you think he might give me trouble now. But he would hardly care to apprehend a dying man."

Duffham undertook this expedition—if you can call it one. He found it easier than he anticipated. That same evening, upon quitting Caromel's farm, Duffham went mooning along deep in thought, as to how he should make the disclosure to Charlotte, when he overtook her near his home. Her crape veil was thrown back; her face looked pale and quiet in the starlight.

"You are abroad late," said Duffham.

"I went to see old Miss Pinner this afternoon, and stayed tea with her," answered Charlotte. "And now I am going to run home."

"Would you mind coming in for a few minutes, Mrs. Caromel?" he asked, as they reached his door. "I have something to say to you."

"Can you say it another time? It is nine o'clock, and my mother will be wondering."

"No; another time may not do," said Duffham. "Come in. I won't detain you long."

And, being just one of those yielding people that never assert a will of their own, in she went.

Shut up in Duffham's surgery, which was more remote from Nomy's ears than the parlour, Duffham disclosed to her by degrees the truth. Whether he had to get out his sal-volatile over it, or to recover her from fits, we did not hear. One thing was certain: that

when Mrs. Nash Caromel re-commenced her walk homewards, she was too bewildered to know whether she went on her feet or her head. By that time on the following evening she would have seen her husband.

At least, such was the programme Duffham carved out. But to that bargain, as he found the next day, there might be two words.

Eleven was striking in the morning by the kitchen clock at Caromel's farm, when Grizzel saw Miss Gwinny driving in. The damaged gig had been mended, and she now drove backwards and forwards herself.

"How's the master?" asked she when she entered the kitchen.

"Very ill," answered Grizzel. "He won't be with us long now, ma'am."

And when Miss Gwinny saw Nash, and saw how greatly he was altered in the last two days, she thought as Grizzel did—that death was close at hand. Under these circumstances, she sat down to reflect on what she ought to do: whether to remain herself in the house, or whether to go back to the Rill and report to her father and sister. For the latter had come out of her insensibility; the doctors said there was no permanent injury and she could soon be removed home if she wished to be.

"What do you think, Grizzel?" she enquired, condescending to ask counsel. "It seems not right to leave him—and you won't like to be left alone, either, at the last. And I don't see that any end will be gained by my hastening back to tell them. They'll know it soon enough: and they cannot come to him."

"As you please, Miss Gwinny," replied Grizzel, trembling lest she should remain and complicate matters, but not daring to urge her departure; Gwinny Nave being given, as a great many more ladies are, to act by the rules of contrary in the matter of advice. "It seems hardly right, though, not to let the mistress know he is dying. And I am glad the child's well: dear little thing!"

Gwinny Nave sat pulling at her one straw ringlet, her brow knitted in abstraction. Various reflections, suggesting certain unpleasant facts, passed rapidly through her mind. That Nash would not be here many days longer, perhaps not many hours, was a grave fact: and then what of the after necessities that would arise? A sham funeral had gone out of that house not over long ago: but how was the real funeral to go out, and who was to make the arrangements for it? The truth of Nash Caromel's being alive, and of the trick which had been played, would have to be disclosed then. And Mr. Nave was incapacitated, he could do nothing, and her sister could do as little; and it seemed to be all falling upon herself, Gwinny; and who was to know but she might be punished for letting Nash lie and die without calling in a doctor to him?

With every fresh moment of thought, some darker complication presented itself. Miss Gwinny began to see that she had better get

away, and leave old Grizzel to it. The case must be laid before her father. He might invent some scheme to avoid exposure: for though Lawyer Nave was deprived for the present of action, his mind was not less keen and fertile than usual.

"I think, Grizzel, that the mistress ought to be told how ill he is," said she at length. "I shall go back to the Rill. Do all you can for the master: I daresay he will rally."

"That he never will," spoke Grizzel on impulse.

"Now don't you be obstinate," returned Miss Gwinny.

Gwendolen Nave drove back to the Rill. Leaving, as she thought, all responsibility upon old Grizzel. And, that evening, the coast being clear again, Charlotte Tinkle, piloted by Duffham, came to Caromel's Farm and had an interview with her once recreant husband. It lasted longer than Duffham had bargained for; every five minutes he felt inclined to go and knock at the door. Her sobs and his dying voice, which seemed to be sobbing too, might be heard by all who chose to listen. At last Duffham went and said that it must end: the emotion was bad for him. She was kneeling before the sofa on which he lay, her tears dropping on his face.

"Good-bye, good-bye, Charlotte," he whispered. "I have never cared for anyone as I cared for you. Believe that. God bless you—and forgive me!"

And the next to go in was Harry Tinkle—to clasp Caromel's hand, and to say how little he had needed to fear him. And the next was the Reverend Mr. Holland: Nash had asked for the parson to be sent for.

Grizzel got a surprise the next day. She had just taken some beef-tea up to her master, which Duffham had called out for—for the end was now so near that the doctor had not chosen to defer his visit till dark—when a closed fly drove up, out of which stepped Miss Gwinny and her sister. Old Grizzel dropped the waiter, thinking it must be her mistress's ghost.

But it was Charlotte herself. Upon hearing Gwinny's report, she had insisted upon coming home—and Nave supported her views. That stupid old Grizzel, left to her own devices, might be for getting frightened and for calling in half the parish. The doctor in attendance at the Rill had said Mrs. Caromel might go home if she had any urgent reason for wishing it—and here she was. And really she seemed tolerably well again; quite herself.

Passing Grizzel with a nod, she went upstairs, opened Nash's door, and then—drew back with a scream. For there she saw two strangers. Mr. Duffham was leaning over the bed, trying to feed Nash with spoonfuls of beef-tea; Parson Holland (who had stayed with Nash all night) sat by the fire. Poor Nash himself lay without motion: the hours were very limited now.

Well, there ensued a commotion. Charlotte Nave went down to blow up Grizzel; and she did it well, in spite of her recent illness.

Grizzel answered that she was not to blame; it was not she who had betrayed him: Dobbs the blacksmith and Squire Todhetley had found him out, and the Squire had called in Duffham. Charlotte the Second had to make the best of a bad case; but she did not suspect half the treachery which had been at work.

There is no space to enlarge upon the day. Nash died that night: without having been able to speak a word to Charlotte the Second; he was past that when she came; though he shook hands with her.

And the other funeral, which Miss Nave had foreseen a difficulty over, took place without any. Unless it might be said that the crowd made one. Nash Caromel dead a second time! Church Dykely had never been astounded like this.

But the one dire act of treachery had to come out yet. Nash Caromel had made a fresh will. Crow the lawyer brought it in his pocket when he came from Evesham to attend the funeral, and he read it aloud afterwards. Mrs. Nash the Second sat biting her lips as she listened.

Caromel's Farm and everything upon it, every stick and stone possessed by Nash, was directed to be sold without delay. Of the money this should realize, the one half was devised to "my dear wife Charlotte, formerly Charlotte Tinkle;" the other half was to be invested by trustees and settled upon "my child, Duncan Nave." His mother, Charlotte Nave, was to receive a stated portion of the interest for her life, or until she should marry again: and that was all the will said about Charlotte the Second.

There's not much more to tell. As soon as might be the changes were carried out. Before Lawyer Nave's leg was fit to go again, Caromel's Farm had been purchased by the Squire, and Harry Tinkle had taken it of him on a long lease. Just after Harry got into it with his little girl, Mrs. Tinkle died; and Charlotte, well off now, came to live in it with him. The other Charlotte said she was in bad health, and went off to stay at the sea-side. And Nave, when he came out again in the eyes of Church Dykely (walking lame), was fit to swallow us up with rage. He considered ladies' parasols an infamous institution and wished they were all sunk in the sea; especially that particular blue one of Charlotte's which had led to the accident that unlucky afternoon.

It seemed strange that, after all the chances and changes, it should be a Mrs. Nash Caromel (she was always given her true name now) to inhabit Caromel's Farm. She, forgiving and loving, made friends with little Dun for poor Nash's sake, inviting him often to spend the day with her, and picking him choice fruit off the trees.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

THE ORKNEY AND SHETLAND ISLANDS.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, AUTHOR OF "THROUGH HOLLAND."

HE who goes to the Orkneys for relaxation and enjoyment must take the risk of fair weather. Everything depends upon the fulfilment of this condition, and nothing can be done without it. The sources of amusement are not unlimited, but they are good of their kind; they brace up the nerves and the muscles, and send a man back to a crowded town and hard work, ready to take his part in the battle of life. There is a certain amount of grouse shooting; there is good fishing, both sea and lake; and there is no lack of boating. The surrounding islands—dating from the mainland—may be visited; the more distant by means of the little steamer that leaves Kirkwall twice a week, and those nearer home in smaller boats.

But so sudden are the changes of climate and weather, that there is a certain amount of risk in venturing any distance from the mainland in a sailing or rowing boat. Not precisely a risk to life, but certainly of being out on the water many more hours than was bargained for at starting, and in a state of misery: the discomfort of being wet through and through with the water coming down from above or shipped in from below. The bright sunshine, and cloudless sky, and fresh breeze which made eight o'clock a smiling morn, hot and exhilarating, at noon may have turned to torrents of rain and leaden skies, or, worse still, to a thick, impenetrable mist, cold and chilling to the bone: an insidious enemy that lays many a one low upon his back in the pains and penalties of rheumatism and lumbago. The most powerful charm against these troubles is to invoke the "spirits of the vasty deep": spirits consisting not of good and evil genii, but of distillations from pure malt, that Scotchmen call whisky, and have learned only too well its good and bad qualities. This, taken in moderation, is the best antidote to fogs and rains and Scotch mists.

But the moderation must be observed. Not after the fashion of a boatman, who went out with us for a day's fishing in Shetland. We had taken a stock of Bass's pale ale in the boat—which, by the way, is perhaps not the best beverage for these northern seas and misty isles—but no whisky. Our boatman, Sandy, innocently remarked that he had brought with him a bottle of pure water, which he preferred to beer—though he had no objection to an occasional bottle of the latter. From his supply of pure water, he took occasionally a good pull and a strong pull: and I noticed that the pure water had a surprising effect upon his cheerfulness, and brought out a fine flow of conversational powers. Still I thought—if I thought at all—that

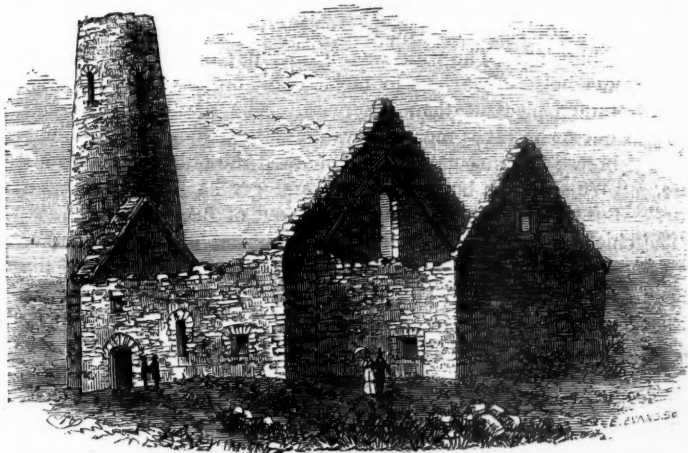


ORKNEY ISLANDS, LOOKING TOWARDS KIRKWALL.

it was pure water, and that only. I was not so much surprised at my own innocence, as at that of my companion, who, no recent visitor to Shetland, might have been more on the alert. When the supply was gone, Sandy gazed at the empty bottle with a melancholy that told well for the attractions of total abstinence. It was only when we landed, and Sandy's gait had gained too much of the unsteadiness of the boat, that the truth flashed upon us. "That bottle of pure water was pure whisky," muttered G., almost staggering, though from a different cause. "And our beer might have been more worthily destined." In truth we had somewhat denied ourselves for the sake of an ungrateful hypocrite.

In its season there is, I have said, a certain amount of grouse shooting in Orkney; quite enough to furnish good sport. Mr. Dunnet, of the Kirkwall hotel, had a number of acres at his command, for the benefit of his guests; but it is of course to be had in greater perfection by those who may be acquainted with the various "lairds" or estate owners of the islands, who carefully preserve their game. The grouse is an unknown bird in Shetland, though common enough in Orkney. There are certain lakes also, well stocked with trout. But the chief pleasure and attraction is to be cruising about the

water on a warm day, in and out amongst the neighbouring isles ; to note, enjoy, and revel in the wonderful tone and colouring of land and sea ; the exquisite purity and lightness of the air, the corresponding brightness of the sky. Over and above this, there is the quietness and repose of the islands and seas ; characterising them in the most marked manner : imparting a sense of solitude to the visitor, yet neither dreariness nor desolation ; refreshing the spirit, soothing and restoring the nerves of anyone who has come from "down south," overdone, it may be, with work and the gaieties of a London season : anxious to get, not only out of, but very far away from the restless crowd, the glitter and glare, the rush and whirl, that after a certain point weigh as a nightmare upon all save those happy few who came into the world before nerves were invented. I know nothing more



RUINS OF CHURCH, EGLESHAY.

invigorating in such a case than a sojourn in the Orkney, but more especially and emphatically, in the Shetland Islands.

The traveller must be well equipped. A thin yachting suit that would do for a cruise in the Mediterranean, would in this northern climate soon land him where the wicked cease from troubling. Thick clothes, with warmth but not weight in them, that will resist many a drenching of sea-water, will be found serviceable. A long ulster with a hood to it will be highly valued. Thick boots, and of course top boots if much lake or fly fishing is intended, must not be omitted. For walking, thick boots are optional. Most men will say they can walk much further in thick than in thin boots : my own experience is the opposite. Waterproof leggings and overcoat will frequently bring indifference to rough seas and pelting rains, and send you home with a dry skin. It is important to be suitably

clad in these islands. You are not dressing for fashion: and as frequently you have no one but a boatman, the fishes, and the gulls to keep you company, it matters little if you sometimes look startling enough to amaze a wild Indian. The refinements of civilized life will be more appreciated in their turn.

One fine morning—it was a Saturday, and one of the few bright skies I had in Orkney—I took a boat, and with a couple of trusty men sailed away from Kirkwall. Our destination was the neighbouring Isle of Egleshay. We carried with us a supply of bottled ale and sandwiches, for the hour of our return was uncertain. The steamer that had come in that morning from Scotland left the harbour at the same moment, and for a little time we had a race; our small craft tumbling and beating about in the rough water caused by the paddles. This passed away, and soon no signs remained of the steamer but a long line of smoke. The sea was perfectly calm, but a fresh breeze was blowing. The wind was against us; consequently, when the sail was hoisted, we had to tack. This prolonged the cruise, but was rather pleasant than otherwise. The day was before us; time was our own. It is more enjoyable to sail than to row. “A splendid breeze to bring us home,” remarked the old boatman to his mate. “We shall run before the wind and get back in less than an hour.” But, as the event proved, he was out of his reckoning.

The chief attraction of Egleshay is its ancient church—or rather the ruins of what was once a church. There is also the ruin of the Palace of Birsay in the extreme north-west of the mainland: an ancient seat of the Earls of Orkney. The site is well chosen for a palace, bordering the water and sheltered by the hills. There is Noltland Castle in the Island of Westray, also a ruin, and also beautifully situated, with its neighbouring water and sheltering hills. But the most interesting of all is, in some respects, the ruin of the old church in Egleshay. It is difficult to say when it was constructed; probably in the ninth century. It is a perfect ruin, conspicuous for its round tower, of which there are so few specimens in existence. Nothing but the walls of the church remain, but they are substantial, and are likely to see out many a generation to come.

The ruin is surrounded by a more modern dry stone wall, a few feet in height. Rough stones have been formed into steps by which the enclosure is reached. Here are many gravestones with inscriptions more or less curious. One, I remember well, recorded the death of the schoolmaster, who for nearly forty years had lived his quiet life upon the island, teaching the children of the scanty population, seeing no change, knowing nothing of the rise and progress of the outer world. Who can divine his thoughts and aspirations during that long life? Was he content to vegetate and sink from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age and the grave, oblivious of the world, whose far off roaring could reach him not even in imagination? Or did he long, until the longing, like a fire whose intensity the more

quickly consumes itself, died out, to get away into that world, to see its kingdoms and to know its people? I know not; but as I read the record of that long, quiet, eventless life, a feeling of appalling silence and solitude fell upon me, more deep and real than the silence of the grave itself.

In that day, as in this, there was a schoolhouse upon the island, but no church. Sunday after Sunday the primitive inhabitants would get into their boats and row across to the neighbouring island of Rousay, to attend service. This over, the little band of worshippers would get back into their boats and row homewards, and spend the rest of the day in such peace and quietness as we cannot know. It must have been, it must be still, a pleasant sight. This little cluster of boats starting across the water with its living freight of youth and age each returning Sunday, to attend service in one or other of the churches of its more favoured sister island.

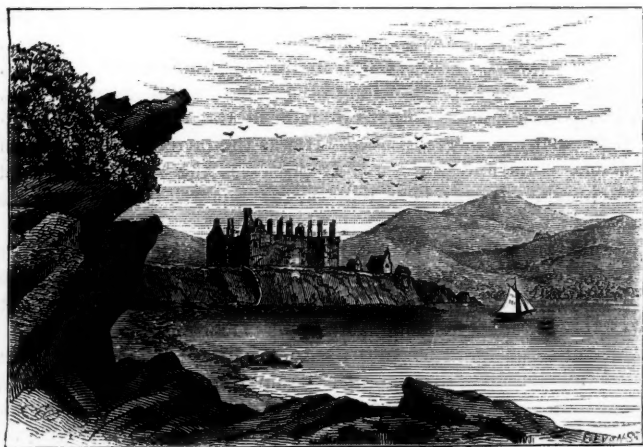
But Rousay is also larger and more important than Egleshay. The latter is small; two miles long by one mile at its broadest point. Yet it has played a more important part in the history of the Orkneys than many a larger island. It was the favourite residence of the ancient earls and bishops. It possesses the ruin of the most ancient church. It was here that St. Magnus was murdered by his wicked and ambitious cousin.

We went on our way that Saturday morning, and nothing of its kind could have been more delightful. There was wind enough to fill our sail, and send us along at something like good speed. The sky was cloudless. The smooth water was clear and transparent, so that we could see quite far into its mysterious depths. The water reflected all manner of colours: "rainbow-coloured tints" that charmed the eye. We had possession of the seas. I do not think we passed one boat, even a fisherman. Once or twice, it is true, we saw in the far-off distance, in the opening that separated one island from another, a large vessel with her sails all set, speeding before the wind, bound north or southwards; and that was all. Our own seas we had to ourselves. The day had risen unexpectedly in its beauty, and for this reason, perhaps, no other craft had ventured out.

As we neared Egleshay, it was impossible to avoid being struck by the beauty of its aspect. The ruin of the church, looking towards Rousay, was a conspicuous and picturesque object, carrying you back in one moment to ages, and men, and deeds that are buried in the centuries, and have their record in the middle ages. The elevation of Egleshay and its outline was marked by a long rim that cut the sky with scarcely any undulation. Across the water, dignified and beautiful, stood Rousay. As it appeared on that bright day it was the most pleasant looking of all the islands of Orkney I had yet seen. The land rose to a much greater height than Egleshay; indeed it is one of the highest of the group; and was broken by

valleys and undulations to which variety lent its charm. It is said that in no part of the island is there a level plain. It was apparently cultivated and fertile, and possessed nothing of the barren, naked look that distinguishes so many of the islands. No wonder, with such an object in prospect, that Egleshay had once been the favourite resort of the earls. Like all the other islands, Rousay possesses no trees, but is said to be well stocked with game, and its lakes and rivulets with trout.

It was a matter of some difficulty to land at Egleshay: difficult to get sufficiently near the shore and not strike aground or run foul of some concealed rock. An edge of grey rock terminated and surrounded the island, upon which grew multitudes of white-shelled



PALACE OF BIRSAY.

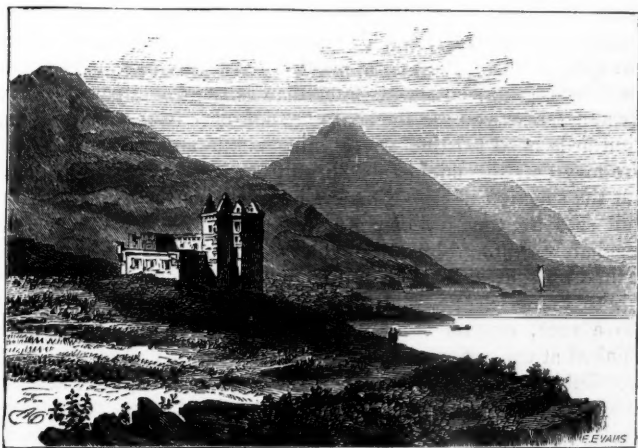
limpets, which are considered not fit to eat by the people, and magnificent seaweed. Near shore the water was of the utmost transparency, tinted here with exquisite aqua marine, there with dark purple. Looking into the shallow depths, the eye rested upon the bottom. Beautiful anemones, and variegated seaweed, and curious shells arrested the attention. It was a kingdom worthy of fairyland; more wonderful than anything of its kind I had ever seen on the western shores of England or elsewhere.

We landed at last, and one of the boatmen accompanied me on my walk to the church. Anything more solitary than the island could not well be found. We appeared to have it all to ourselves: no living creature was visible. Here and there a little Orkney house or hut, built after the prevalent Orkney fashion of dry stone walls, reared its head; but where the two hundred people or more, said to inhabit the

island, stow themselves, it was difficult to conceive. The island is well cultivated, and is improving under the hands of time and care.

We had about a mile to walk, and over not very even ground. Every now and then we came to a marshy spot, artfully concealed, that landed us up to our ankles in water, the only drawback to our pleasure. For there was something in the desolate solitude of the island that carried its own peculiar charm. Whether it would have survived the strain of a lengthened sojourn remains perhaps a not very difficult problem to solve. What must it have been for the school-master after forty years?

We reached the ruins at last, and spent some time amongst them; one of us at least yielding to the influence they threw over the mind



NOLTLAND CASTLE, WESTRAY.

like a charm or a dream: contemplating and realizing with a species of second sight the scenes that took place here when the bold Norsemen ruled the seas and islands with their rough sway. Then the boatman—who had not visited the ruins for years—went off to a neighbouring farm-house for a draught of milk to quench his thirst. Unlike the Shetland Sandy, he was in reality a teetotaler, and had refused all offers of beer. Much honour he did the system, for a finer specimen of his genus could not easily be found. In these islands, wherever you wander, if you enter a cottage and ask for a glass of water, they would think it inhospitable to bring you anything but milk. As a rule they will accept nothing in payment.

We left the ruins and gradually got back to the boat. The man in charge had piloted her round into a tiny natural creek, more convenient for putting off. As we did so the wind began to drop. We

crossed the water and cruised round about Rousay, until the wind grew less and less and our prospects of getting home diminished. Had the wind kept up, it would, as the boatman had said, have run us into Kirkwall harbour in less than an hour. But it fell almost to a calm, and our progress was of the slowest. Evening was drawing on apace. Here and there we passed a rock crowded with gulls or cormorants. Now a cormorant would take wing from one island, and with immense strength and speed take a long flight to another, skimming the surface of the water.

Black and cruel they look with their long necks stretching ahead ; and cruel enough they are when they get hold of their prey. But seated in the water, or perched upon rocks, their long necks stretched upwards, they are rather pretty birds : sharp-eyed apparently as an outpost. Yet it is the gull that acts as sentinel to the cormorant, and gives warning of the approach of danger, though seemingly the less vigilant species. A flock of cormorants is never seen perched upon a rock without a gull, who acts as watchman to the whole party. When danger approaches you see the sharp yet soft eyes of the gull and the beautiful little head twisting and turning about and calculating how long he may defy the enemy. The cormorants are motionless, and without the sanction of the gull make no attempt to move. Suddenly the gull sees the time has come, he makes a quick dart away, and is immediately followed by all his black companions.

We had no gun with us that evening, and the birds were sharp enough to know it. So, though we several times approached very near to a rock, out on the bold sea, the birds opened their eyes and blinked at us, and, nodding their heads as much as to say good night, quietly settled down again. Now a porpoise would roll past us, an object of no great beauty. Then the light went out of the sky, and with darkness came a dead calm. We were cold and shivery. The men took down the sail and took up the oars. The steamer from the North Isles passed us and went into Kirkwall. The light from the end of the pier gleamed out red and fiery, and seemed to defy us ever to reach it. But we did so at last between ten and eleven o'clock at night : quite four hours out of our reckoning, through the fickleness of the wind. I was not sorry to get back to the hotel ; to see a fire blazing in my small sitting-room provided by the thoughtful landlord ; a snow-white cloth upon the table, and a little supper waiting, than which no little supper was ever more thankfully greeted. This was my pleasantest day in the Orkney. For long it left a charm behind : a charm only to be realized by those who have breathed the exquisite air of a warm, fine day in these latitudes, and noted—what has already been alluded to—the wonderful colouring and combined effects and blending together of earth and sea and sky.

A few days later on, the great event of the year in Kirkwall took place : the Lammas fair. Scott makes some of the leading incidents

in "The Pirate" turn upon this occurrence, or rather he made it the occasion for shifting the scenes and characters of his novel from Shetland to Orkney. It was a very different journey in those days. Then there were no steamers to defy wind and tide. Starting from any port you never knew at what period you might reach your destination: days might elapse, or weeks. So when the old Udaller and his fair daughters, Minna and Brenda, embarked from Shetland, they were happy in possessing the swift breezes of the novelist to land them in due time on the shores of Orkney.

Perhaps the town of Kirkwall has changed less than most other things about the mainland. Generations have passed away; agriculture has somewhat relieved the barrenness of the soil. But the cathedral was there, looking very much as it looks now; and many of the houses were there that we see to-day. Thus, they who have been to Orkney can easily and accurately picture the scenes and incidents that occupied the hearts and minds of the sisters. It is easy, also, to picture the weird and powerful face and figure of the interesting but unhappy Norna, haunting the precincts of the cathedral, concealing herself behind its massive pillars, flitting in the dead of night amongst the gravestones, and mysteriously appearing and disappearing by means of her secret passages, defying sentries, and striking terror to their hearts by her apparently supernatural power.

The fair, too, has gone down since the days of which Scott wrote. It was then a great event. It lasted a fortnight, and brought people from all the neighbouring islands and from some parts of Scotland. Kirkwall, for the time being, would be a scene of the liveliest and most crowded dissipation, such as it knows nothing of in these later times. In vain we should look to-day for the type of the old Udaller. Magnus Troil lives only in the past and in Scott's pages. Vainly we search for such a character as Bryce Snailsfoot amongst the merchants of the fair. He, too, has departed with the better men. Nothing half so interesting could be found. Would it be too much to add, no conscience so elastic?

Nevertheless, the fair yet exists; and though no longer what it was, it is still the exciting and important event of the year in Orkney. It brings a large number of people from the surrounding islands. Boat after boat, sailing or steaming, conveys its freight of living creatures, biped and quadruped, to the mainland. It is chiefly a cattle fair, and a large number of horses and other animals are bought and sold. Young men and maidens make it their annual holiday, and pass the time in merry-making, love-making, and flirting to their hearts' content. How many matches are made and marred at these times who shall assert?

The fair is held on Wideford Hill, about a mile out of the town of Kirkwall. A long hill that gradually ascends to a considerable height, and lies to your left hand as you stand upon the pier looking seawards. The quiet town on these two days was a scene of noise

and confusion. The houses and inns were crowded, and I wondered how my landlord managed to keep his own premises so quiet and respectable. Crowded, too, was the long narrow street that chiefly composes the capital. Songs, and loud laughter, and music—especially the bagpipe—predominated. It has been said, "Oh, that mine enemy had written a book," and it might be varied by, "Oh, that mine enemy were haunted by a bagpipe." A band of three musicians drove me nearly wild. A fiddle, a double bass, and a species of Irish harp, that went up and down the street, and down and up, hour after hour, playing the twice dismal refrain of "The Mistletoe Bough," and nothing else. It was almost enough to drive a whole town melancholy mad.

I went up to the fair one afternoon—partly from curiosity, partly from the duty each owes to himself of seeing all that can be seen. Events that are opportunities seldom repeat themselves. I certainly do not ever wish to undergo again the opportunity or event of a Kirkwall fair. It may be seen once without regret: never twice. So I went through the long street, past the cathedral and the post office, out of the town, and up the road leading to Wideford Hill. It was quite unnecessary to ask the way. Every vehicle of every description that the town could boast, almost to a wheelbarrow; every living creature that bore the faintest resemblance to a horse, and possessed four available legs or even three, had been pressed to the rescue. Conveyances that held ten people were made to do duty for twenty. It was an amazing sight. Now a horse, tired and jaded, would stand still in the middle of the road, and refuse to move any further; the driver would shake the reins, probably made of rope, and beat up the animal with a whip minus a lash, therefore useless. The whole party in despair, at their wits' though not at their journey's end, would rise in a body and shout with one voice, only to terrify the unlucky quadruped into rigid paralysis. Another load, more fortunate, would spin along at a rate that exhilarated the inmates to uproarious mirth, whilst they would look back with cruel jeers at the paralyzed vehicle. But the greater portion of carts and conveyances proceeded at a funereal pace, willing to bide their time and reach the end when it came.

Boys and men were astride horses they hoped to see the last of that day; and now and then a simple-looking youth somewhat recalled the figure of Moses Primrose, but without the chance of the gross of silver-rimmed spectacles at the end of the day's work. It was a long, continuous procession; the stream of foot passengers filling up the picture. A more motley throng could not well be conceived. A very large number were from the neighbouring islands, and their costumes were extraordinary from their primitiveness, the ingenuity of the cut, and the variety of their colours. The women and girls were marvellous visions, and as they moved along in a body, looking like a painted rainbow in progress. On a fine day the

effect would have been dazzling ; but the weather was dull and chilly.

Nearing the summit of the hill, and the fair, the first object to arrest attention was an intoxicated piper, so far overcome that he had thrown himself on the wayside bank, with his face in the wet grass, kissing the cold earth. Sundry youthful prodigies had hailed his state with delight, and seizing upon his bagpipes, were playing him into a state of still more senseless sleep. And oh, the happiness of insensibility amidst such unearthly uproar.

Then came the fair. It was a medley. Drinking booths had been erected and were much patronised. Whisky was in deep demand, and down long tables sat men and women drinking some sort of brown liquid out of very small tumblers. I wondered what the precious doses could be, and soon discovered they were nothing rarer than beer. There were merry-go-rounds, patronised by those who had apparently long passed their youth, yet had not reached years of discretion. "*Il faut payer pour ses plaisirs.*" The men had to work as well as pay for their pleasure, for the horses were so many velocipedes, and the whole concern only went as fast as it was worked : a clever idea on the part of the envied proprietor. Stalls abounded, in which concertinas and other attractive articles were being sold, at a price that would land the seller the next week in the workhouse, if sundry and oft repeated statements might be relied on. Many of the men were silly from the quantity they had consumed ; many others had reached a more advanced stage. Noise, uproar, and confusion. A few yards further on, seeming strangely out of place, a group were singing psalms and hymns in most sepulchral tones ; whilst the leader every now and then addressed his hearers, taking refuge in another hymn whenever his ideas grew scanty or his words confused. Beyond all, in different parts of the wide plain, horses were standing about singly or in numbers, waiting purchasers. But the great business of the day to the larger part of the people, was to laugh and have what they thought fun, and drink far more than pockets would sanction or heads could carry.

So it went on for an eternity of two days ; business diminishing, but not so pleasure seekers, drinkers, or the stock of ale and whisky. The latter, apparently, seemed like the enchanted well : the more water that was drawn, the more there was to draw. Happy for them had the supplies been nothing stronger than water. Many of the girls of the country had really pretty faces and almost graceful figures. Others, on the contrary, were a dream of ugliness ; almost impossibly ugly ; ill-favoured and ill-formed by nature ; of that peculiar type rarely, if ever met with, except in places inaccessible to the world at large. I had very soon had quite enough of Lammas fair. Wonderful, indeed, must be the alteration since the days of Minna and Brenda Troil and the old Udaller.

As I returned, the piper was still lying with his face in the wet

grass; the boys were still performing upon the pipes with a sound that might have waked the dead or roused the Seven Sleepers, but could have no effect upon the sleep born of whisky. No draught of chlorate was ever so deep and senseless. I wended my way back to the town. As I went, the proverbial mist fell; the aspect of things changed; all surrounding objects were shut out. Young men and women drew very close together in couples under umbrellas: the same old story, though up in Orkney. But no umbrella could keep out the damp, penetrating mist. It did not rain, or attempt to rain, but when I reached the inn I was wet through and cold; with a cold far more unpleasant than that of a sharp frost in a dryer clime.

The mist cleared away by night; the people came down from the hill; the streets were full of noisy loungers. It was a wonder where they all slept. The town could not expand, yet here was a visitation that might have put many a larger place upon its mettle. But no doubt they all found a resting-place somewhere: in stables, over lofts, under counters: bathing machines there were none. By midnight or one in the morning, Kirkwall had sunk to a well-earned repose; the streets were deserted; the houses blinked at each other; the cathedral stood amidst solemn silence—the silence of the tomb; of eight centuries.

Two days later I again saw the piper going through the town. His progress was a triumph. He was still intoxicated, but was just able to tack, like a ship sailing against the wind. He was playing his bagpipes furiously, and a long tail of boys followed at his heels, hurrahing and cheering. The man seemed in the seventh heaven of delight! supremely happy; and none the worse for his late sleep upon mother earth.



LA TOUR DU LUC.

THE Breton town of St. Gildas is remarkable for its ugliness and for the tradition that the "subtle doctor," Abailard, was once abbot of its ancient monastery. The country around St. Gildas consists mostly of well-cultivated plains, flat and treeless. If you walk a couple of miles along the coast, you will come upon the old Château and demesnes of the Comtes du Luc. The Château is a sturdy structure; a mixture of strength, beauty, and, some say, bad taste, built in the romanesque and pointed gothic styles of architecture. The grounds are exquisitely laid out, and the base of the wide terrace is washed by the waves of the Atlantic.

The Comtes du Luc were always deemed to be the proudest of the proud: "Roi, je ne puis, Duc, je ne daijne, Du Luc, je suis." This had been the motto of their house. After the revolution of '93, they had again raised their heads—when few of their order had heads to raise—haughty as before. But under the second Empire, the pride of their house had a fall. Gaston, Comte du Luc, deserted the cause of Henri V.; and to the horror of the Faubourg St. Germain, haute volée, accepted a post at the Imperial Court, and plunged into the ultra-brilliant society which filled the salons of the ruling party.

But he died. And the discovery, made after his death, that his estates were seriously involved, however much it might have gratified his former party, who looked upon him as a renegade, was an intense surprise to all the world. How could he have got out of his money? He had been thought rich; and the Du Luc property was very valuable. Some people said it must have been "high play," others, that he must have gone in for private speculation.

The late Comte du Luc's steward and notary, one Monsieur Georges Bellemine, who chiefly resided at St. Gildas, appeared to have the papers and accounts all en règle. He did not, he said, know how the money had been spent; his late master had never enlightened him; but spent it was, and the Château sold. Sold? Yes, the last mad act that Monsieur le Comte had done was to demand the title deeds from him, and sell the château and all pertaining to it: and he had finished up, no doubt, by spending the money. Any way, the Château was shut up, and had passed away from the Du Lucs.

These very unpleasant matters had been communicated to the new heir, Hervé du Luc, by letters from the steward. The young Comte, who had been educated in Paris, and, like his father, resided there, feeling perhaps that he was unable to cope with this blow, sent a relative to St. Gildas to enquire personally into matters with the

steward. All that this relative could gather was, that the late Comte *had* spent the money, that the steward was angry he should not have confessed it before he died, instead of leaving upon him the onus of declaring it afterwards, and that there would be a very small income indeed for the present Comte: only a score or two of pounds a year.

Pleasant! Hervé du Luc was not yet twenty-five, was handsome, accomplished, intellectual. He found it very hard to give up the delights of a Paris life. Not those delights which enervate the mind, and which all good and sober people must condemn; the young Comte had no taste for such things: but the delights of the large libraries, of scientific music, and of the best and most refined society that the gay capital affords.

He could not fathom this terrible blow which had so changed all his prospects. One moment he would feel convinced that some treachery must have been at work; the next, he felt that, whether or not, he must accept things as they were, rather than by any enquiry bring some hideous ill-doing to light, which would throw discredit upon his late father's name. His first step now must be to see the notary and try to make out something or other from him.

So he wound up his life in Paris, gave up the house there, bid adieu to his best friends, and departed for St. Gildas. He found the Château shut up indeed. But—where was the agent?

Monsieur Bellemine had gone travelling, he was told. Having no longer occupation in the place, he had left it and was going about with his daughter to see the world. This hasty departure struck the young Comte as strange. From that moment he strongly suspected M. Bellemine. Some instinct told him that he had been the wolf in sheep's clothing who had ruined his father: though he did not yet feel sure that he might trust to the instinct.

The young Comte was not known at St. Gildas, not having been there since his childhood. Once his education had begun, his father removed him to Paris, and he had never visited the Château since.

About a mile from the Château, stood a ruined tower, called *La Tour du Luc*. It was all that remained to him of the homes of his ancestors. That old *Tour* had not been sold with the rest: perhaps M. Bellemine had forgotten it; or perhaps the new purchaser had not thought the ruinous old thing worth his attention. Old Babette, once the housekeeper at the Château, had taken refuge in the tumble-down place with her two sons, and nobody interfered with her.

It was built on arches, on a narrow strip of land that jutted into the ocean. At high tide the sea entirely covered this strip, and in stormy weather surged under the arches with a force that shook the whole structure. Why it had ever been built in such a place none of the present generation knew; any more than they knew why it was not sold with the Château.

To this old tower, Hervé du Luc betook himself. Babette nearly fainted with surprise the night of his arrival. *She* knew him:

she had been to Paris between whiles during her late master's lifetime.

"I am come to live here, Babette," he said. "For a time, at any rate. I shan't give you much trouble. And remember, please, that I am *Monsieur Hervé*; nobody else. It may be as well not to declare myself to the good people around at present."

So, in that time-worn old tower on the coast of Brittany, Hervé du Luc took up his abode. He was looked upon as Babette's lodger: as some young bourgeois who was passably well off and liked to live in quiet and enjoy the pure sea air. He had his books, his violin, his long walks for amusement, and made acquaintance with the peasants and fishermen, as M. Hervé. Only Babette and her stalwart sons, Jean and Louis, knew him to be the young Comte du Luc. Those were his amusements. His *business* was to seek proofs to verify, or the contrary, his suspicions of Georges Bellemine.

He searched here, he enquired there. He made friends with the new notary who had taken to Bellemine's business; aided by Babette and some keys in her possession he went into the Château in secret, examined papers, visited closets and archives. And thus the time went on.

II.

One morning, as Babette was preparing the galettes for M. Hervé's breakfast, her son Louis came into the tower. The two young men had established themselves on a small farm near the tower, but ran in every day, being dutiful sons, to see their mother. The tide was out this morning, and Louis had walked across the sands.

"Well, my son?" cried the old lady.

Louis did not respond. He had the aquiline nose, oval face, and dark eyes of the Breton: and he had also the Breton taciturnity.

Therefore Babette thought nothing of his silence: she was used to it. She turned the galettes with a flat shovel and began putting the smoking buck-wheat cakes on a plate. Then she had leisure to speak again.

"Well, Louis?"

"They have come," said Louis, shortly.

"They? Who?"

"Monsieur Bellemine and Mademoiselle."

Babette, shovel in hand, stared at him.

"Come where?"

"To the Château. Came last night. Are going to live in it."

"Bah!" said Babette. "This white flour was not ground from blé noir, my son. They may *live* in it, but not as its masters."

"But they have come as its masters. Pierre Cardac told me so."

Babette pushed back her grey hair. Her wrath was rising.

"Pierre Cardac went to the Château last night, and was engaged

by M. Bellemin as servant. Monsieur and Mademoiselle mean to keep up state in it—just as the late Comte did in his younger days.”

“You have been drinking, Louis!”

“My mother, you know better.”

“Pierre Cardac was drunk, then, when he said it.”

“Nonsense, mother! Pierre Cardac drinks only the two-sous cider. The Bellemines are going to have their carriages and lord it in purple and fine linen, Pierre says. Mademoiselle——”

Babette rushed at her stalwart son and tried to shake him.

“How dare you, Louis? *They* at the Château du Luc keeping state, and our young Comte in this miserable, ruinous, water-soaked tower! Would heaven permit *that*, do you think? The Bellemines are not fit to tie the shoes of Monsieur le Comte du Luc.”

“All the same, they are at the Château,” returned Louis, stolidly, “and you can go out after Monsieur’s breakfast is served and see for yourself. And Pierre says they are going to be grand.”

Babette trembled ominously. She wished Louis was a little boy again, that she might shake him to some purpose.

“I saw Mademoiselle Marguerite on the beach just now,” went on Louis. “She is quite a woman grown, and more beautiful than ever. Her father might have played the rogue, as you think, mother: I’m sure I don’t know about that: but she knows it not if he did. She is mild, and sweet, and good—just an angel.”

This was the climax. Louis had to dodge beyond reach of his mother’s shovel. Old Babette had not been so angry for years.

“You vaurien!” she exclaimed. “You are like all men, Louis—a vaurien: a pretty face is everything with you. Mademoiselle may look nice, but what’s her father? Can a thistle bring forth figs, I ask you? Did you not hear M. le Curé ask the self-same thing only last Sunday? Your Monsieur Bellemines and your Mademoiselles, indeed! Why, you must be growing wicked!”

Louis stood twisting his hat in perplexity. With the best intentions in the world, he had raised this storm. He had never thought his mother so unreasonable before.

“There, go along with you to your work, Louis. What are you idling your day here for to recount your ridiculous tales? And, just hark! don’t tell this news to Monsieur Hervé, should you chance to see him. It’s not so good but that he may be allowed his own time to find it out. Don’t tell anybody.”

Louis nodded assent. The old dame went up to serve her master’s breakfast, and kept her own counsel. And so M. Hervé remained in ignorance for some length of time to come, of what so much concerned him.

Chance, or fate, or whatever the reader may decide, brought him this very first day into contact with Marguerite. They met on the sea-shore. Hervé, wandering about there, came in view of a young lady seated half way up the rocks. She had just dropped a small

basket that contained moss. He picked it up and handed it to her by means of his stick. She blushed and thanked him. It was the sweetest voice he had ever heard, and decidedly the sweetest face he had ever seen; and Hervé wondered who in the world she was and where she had come from. From St. Gildas, he supposed.

But Pierre Cardac's report about the grand doings that were to set in at the Château proved to be a false one. Monsieur Bellemine probably was at the château, but he kept himself closely shut up. There were no carriages, no servants (save Pierre Cardac and a woman who had been Marguerite's nurse), no visitors; no anything. For all people saw or knew, the château might be empty still.

If Monsieur Bellemine had been guilty of unorthodox practices for the purpose of getting the Château into his hands, the probability was that the practices had served him a scurvy trick, in taking from him all power to enjoy his possessions. It is so sometimes. He complained of being ill, confined himself to his chamber, and would scarcely ever admit his daughter. Poor Marguerite, innocent as the day of all wrong and suspicion of wrong, believed her father but occupied the Château as *locum tenens* for its present owner—whomsoever he might be. There was no comfort, no companionship for her indoors, and she took to pass a great deal of her time without. As to Pierre Cardac, he probably had received his orders; for he said no more to anybody, since that communication to Louis the first morning, about M. Bellemine being at the Château, but was as close as wax.

In his walks abroad, in his callings-in at the homes of the peasants, the huts of the fishermen, Monsieur Hervé very frequently saw the same young lady who had so won upon him at first sight. He was always catching glimpses of her fair young face in profile, or of her blue eyes glancing timidly away from his. When he did not see her he heard of her: for she was ever performing some good or kind action for the poorer homes, or teaching the farmers' wives to embellish the better ones. Plants began to bloom at windows; older children learnt to make pretty toys for younger; unsightly heaps of dust disappeared, and patches of ornamental garden-ground came up instead. Hervé thought of the heroine of some old ballad, under whose feet violets sprang when she touched the ground.

He did not know who she was. The peasants called her "*Mademoiselle Marguerite*." If any amidst them knew her for Bellemine's daughter, they suppressed it: and it is probable they did not know. He and his name were hated in the neighbourhood, for he had exercised petty tyranny: and who would have associated this angel of goodness with him? Marguerite had lived away of late years in the convent where she was educated. *Mademoiselle Marguerite* was just an angel, the wives said to M. Hervé; and he thought so too.

One day he asked Babette who this *Mademoiselle Marguerite* was. Some young girl, she supposed, who was staying in the neigh-

bourhood—perhaps come for the sea air, answered Babette. *She* was not curious herself, thank heaven. Monsieur knew the story of Mother Eve? The young lady was just Mademoiselle Marguerite, and nothing else. Hervé took the hint: he concluded the young lady, or perhaps her friends, did not want to be known. But that fair, sweet face haunted his dreams.

He grew angry with himself. What was this Mademoiselle Marguerite to him? Nothing. She could be nothing: for was he not a poor ruined man, who might not think of a wife? But what a lovely face it was!—and what thoughtful, liquid, earnest eyes she had! And so the dream began again.

"Our Monsieur Hervé is in love," said Babette one day to her elder son, the giant Jean, as she was preparing the second déjeuner.

"Oui dà," dutifully acquiesced Jean, who knew nothing about it.

"He has a great appetite of late. I know it by that."

"Perhaps his appetite comes from walking so much? I often see him about the rocks and on the beach."

"Tais toi, grand sot!" responded Babette. "Have I not been in love myself when I was young, and don't I remember the signs?"

It was quite true that Monsieur Hervé did walk very much. His eyes fixed on the sea, his brow thoughtful, he might have been seen almost any time pacing about during the day. The hope of meeting Mademoiselle Marguerite might have had something to do with it; but he had great food for reflection in his mind apart from her. Long before Monsieur Bellemine returned to the Château, Hervé had succeeded in discovering proofs of that worthy agent's underhand work, and proofs that were certainly most conclusive to him, though they might not have been deemed absolutely so in the eye of the law. A confidential friend, one of the great Parisian *avocats*, gave it as his opinion that it would be of no use to move in the matter yet. By waiting, more might be learnt.

Lost in a reverie, Hervé strolled along the coast late one afternoon, pondering this advice. He went towards the Château. He generally did go that way, perhaps from old association, perhaps because he should be more likely to meet Marguerite. Grey clouds covered the sky, except in the west, where the strong rays of the setting sun made them luminous with a colour that could only be called golden, but which was far brighter than any gold.

Something fell at his feet—first a handkerchief, then a book. Looking up, he saw Mademoiselle half way up the cliff. *Stuck* there. She was holding on to it, and the things had fallen from her hands. He ran to assist her.

"Mademoiselle Marguerite!"

"Monsieur Hervé," she answered, and laughed pleasantly as she let him take her hand. The frankness of her manner, so unlike that

of most French girls—the sweet, confiding simplicity with which she was wont to meet him, would of itself have won Hervé's heart. In truth, each was in love with the other, though they might know it not. She wore a silk dress, and had a dainty little white cloak on, lined with white silk. By several signs, Hervé had gathered that this young lady had wealth, and, he supposed—station.

"Thank you, sir," she said, as they got safely down and he seated her on the ledge facing the beach and the sea. "I know I ought not to have tried to get up that perpendicular path; but it is pleasanter and quicker than having to go round."

"Were you trying to get up? I thought you were coming down?"

"No; I thought I would try to get up. I might have known that I should get into difficulty. The old English lines came into my mind:—

'Fain would I climb,
But that I fear to fall.'

"Do you speak English, Monsieur Hervé?"

He smiled, and, in answer, quoted some lines of Scott's:

" 'If a path be dangerous known,
The danger proves the lure alone.' "

But he spoke with an odd pronunciation. Her English was, on the contrary, perfect. The shadow of a smile sat on her lips.

"You do know English, then, monsieur."

"I am fond of reading it. As to speaking it, I can say, 'How do you do?' and 'Good morning.' Mademoiselle, I perceive, speaks it perfectly. Are you English?"

"No, but my mother was. She spoke it always with me when I was little; and we had an English lady in the convent, who taught us. So that I have never ceased to speak it, you see, with English persons."

Hervé had picked up the book. It was "Evangeline."

"Ah, a good, a great poet," he remarked. "But I don't like the Americans."

"Why not?"

"I—hardly know. Travellers invading their country give them an odd character."

"You have been reading Dickens, and Mrs. Trollope, and some of those Bohemian books," she laughed. "America will be a very great nation some time: meanwhile, its people have as good qualities as we have, and I like to read about them."

"I have often thought I should like to read this poem," he observed, pointing to the book on his knee—for he had sat down by her. "I have so much liked some of its extracts that I have seen quoted in books."

"I will lend it to you with pleasure," she said immediately. "Take it home with you, and give it back to me any time."

He thanked her warmly, and they sat on together in silence, each one feeling the charm of the hour and of the other's presence, and not perceiving the dusk that was coming on.

It came on rapidly. The luminous glow in the west, which had been growing fainter, was almost suddenly replaced by clouds of inky blackness. They spread themselves over the face of the sky. Marguerite suddenly observed it, and started up.

"Oh, dear! I did not notice that it was getting so late," she exclaimed. "I must say good evening, sir. I beg your pardon for running away so abruptly. I think we are going to have a storm."

"Nay," he answered, slipping "*Evangeline*" into his breast-pocket, "I shall see you safely to your home. Is it in the town?"

"The town! Oh, dear, no. I live here close by."

She walked swiftly along the beach to the proper ascending path, and went as swiftly up it, Hervé walking by her side. To his surprise, she turned to the Château, and opened a little private postern door in an obscure corner of the walls.

"Thank you, sir, very truly. I am at home now."

"But you do not live in the Château?" he exclaimed in amazement.

"Yes, I do."

M. Hervé could not help staring at her. "In the Château!" he repeated. "What, alone?"

"Oh no, not alone. My father is here. Good night, sir. Please don't stay; the storm is beginning."

Hervé made the best of his way to the tower through the blinding rain, the lightning, and the thunder. The warring elements did not seem half so much of a chaos as did his own heart. A most dreadful suspicion filled his mind. This girl, whom, as he knew now, he so deeply loved, who was she? His enemy's daughter?

In shaking his wet coat after he got in, he felt the book. Taking it out, he opened the window to admit of what little light still remained, and read her name on the blank leaf.

"A Marguerite Bellemine, de son père,
GEORGES BELLEMINE."

The name he loved and the name he hated!

He kissed the first name; and then, scarcely knowing what he did, he cast the book into the sea, through the open window.

"So goes my hope!" he muttered. "Dead in its birth! Oh, Marguerite! Marguerite!"

He strode his room like a madman: he felt almost beside himself.

"I *must* not love her. What!—love the daughter of the man who has ruined me? No! But I will give up all for her—she shall never know her father's treachery."

There was no sleep for the poor young Comte that night. He thought fortune was very cruel to him.

In the morning he was aroused by an unusual sound: that of weeping and wailing in the domains of Babette.

"What is the matter?" he asked, going forth.

The old housekeeper was waiting at the door for Hervé. Her dishevelled grey hair had straggled from under her snowy cap. Her eyes were red with weeping.

"Oh, Monsieur Hervé! Oh, Monsieur Hervé!" she cried, "the wrath of Heaven has come upon us! I am the most wretched woman in the world!" Choking sobs prevented her from going further.

"What is it, Babette?" asked Hervé, kindly, grasping her hands.

"My son!—my Louis! O Monsieur Hervé! He has drawn an unlucky number in the conscription! He must go!—he must leave me! I have no money to procure a substitute!"

"Neither have I," sighed Hervé.

"My Louis is lost! He will be killed!" wailed Babette. "He knew of this yesterday, but would not tell it me. Jean came and broke it to me this morning."

"Rest tranquil," Hervé said, abruptly. "He shall have a substitute. We will get him one somehow or other."

A curious idea had come into his own mind. Why should not *he* be the substitute? In this place he could not stay, subjected to seeing her at any moment; and where was he to go, if not to the wars, and what do? The object of his life, the bringing to light the treachery of Bellemine, was at an end, for he could not betray *her* father.

"I love her," he groaned, "she cannot be mine; life has nothing good to give but death."

And so Hervé, to the indignant amazement of Babette, went to serve in place of Louis. France was at war then.

III.

Peace. Time had elapsed, and the war was at an end.

Through the streets of St. Gildas, a pale, emaciated soldier dragged his weary feet. This soldier was Hervé du Luc, whose services had raised him to the grade of lieutenant.

Out towards the sea he went slowly, and along the coast, stopping to rest at frequent intervals. Hervé du Luc had been wounded, and left upon the battle-field for dead. Luckily, however, after he had spent a night of exposure, the fact that he yet lived was discovered by a frère chrétien, and he was cared for; but a delirious fever succeeded. He struggled gallantly with death, and at length quitted the hospital. His feet had brought him to St. Gildas.

He stands on the beach; he finds a seat and remains there in deep thought. Marguerite is as dear to him as ever—but he cannot see her—he will not—he must not.

The evening draws on, and all this while the tide is rising. In the west, purple clouds have succeeded to the sunset. Suddenly he

notices the rising water. He must make his way to the tower—from where he is, it is only knee deep—he must wade it.

And so he does. He reaches the rocky bed on which the tower is built; but the exertion has been too much for him. Sea, sky, and tower, whirl before his eyes. He stretches out his hand helplessly. He falls fainting on the rock.

A sullen sound comes from the ocean. The tide is rising rapidly, and, with it, the storm. In a quarter of an hour, the waves, foaming and fighting, will surge through the arches of the tower, and, if he does not waken, they will bury Hervé du Luc:

Babette, not liking the loneliness of the tower, had removed to a good-sized cottage near her sons. She has been sick for some little time past. The doors and windows are closed, for Babette thinks that air is not good for the sick. Marguerite Bellemine, in a plain dress of deep black, is reading the "Imitation" aloud. She and Babette are good friends now.

Monsieur Georges Bellemine was dead. About a month ago. He had confessed nothing: but, as his will left the Château and all its demesnes to his daughter, the world knew what to think. Marguerite was horrified. She put the parchments into legal hands, desiring that measures should be at once taken for restoring the property to the rightful owners—the du Lucs. A small income, derived from her dead mother, alone remained to her: she quitted the Château, and got old Babette to give her accommodation in her roomy cottage, until, as she expressed it, she could turn herself round. But for one thing, she would have gone straight to the convent for good. That one thing was Monsieur Hervé. She hoped to see him again some time: though he had gone out in the ranks.

Babette babbled of him constantly: of his probity, his goodness, the sacrifice he had made for her son, Louis: but she guarded his identity jealously, and never said a word of that. Had Marguerite known it, she would never have waited for him.

As Marguerite closed her book, and was about to go to her own sitting-room, Louis came in to see his mother. He bowed to Mademoiselle.

"Are we going to have a storm, Louis?" she asked.

"It will be a bad night," he answered. "Does Mademoiselle ask the question for anything in particular?"

"Yes," she said. "I wanted to go and see poor old Grandmère Chaillot: I promised her. Will you walk with me, Louis?"

They started. Mademoiselle did not like to break a promise to the poor and sick. Louis attended her as her escort. The lurid reflection that often precedes a storm, lighted up sea and sky.

"It will be a dreadful night," exclaimed Marguerite as they went along. "The sea seems to be trying to burst its bounds. Louis!—what's that? Somebody is clinging to the nearest arch of the old tower!"

"Where? what?" cried slow Louis, bewildered, and looking in every direction but the right one.

"Don't you see? Look! It is a man. His head and arms are just above the surface."

"Dame!" cried Louis. "So there is!"

"He is drowning! In a few minutes the waves must sweep him away. Oh, Louis, don't you see who it is? Don't you see his face? The boat, the boat! It is Monsieur Hervé."

Louis stared. His eyes were not quick, and he did not recognise the face: he thought Mademoiselle's fancy was deceiving her.

"The boat, the boat!" she reiterated. "Where's Jean? Fetch him."

"But Mademoiselle sees that the boat could not live in such a sea. It would be dashed on the rocks speedily. It's only a fisherman, Mademoiselle, and fishermen can always take care of themselves."

"The boat, the boat!" repeated Marguerite, running to the inlet where it was moored. "He *must* be saved."

"Better that one man should die than two," called out Louis, as he followed her. "As to Monsieur Hervé, it *can't* be, you know, Mademoiselle."

She was herself busy with the boat. "Oh, Louis, remember what he did for you!—he went out to fight in your place! Would you leave him there to die before your eyes?"

She had undone the knot that bound the boat to the stake. The oars lay in it, and she jumped in. Louis unwillingly followed her.

The frail shell was tossed on the crest of a high-mounting wave. Had it washed off what was clinging to the arch? Marguerite Belle-mine closed her eyes and shivered. But the boat held on its way; Hervé saw it, and managed to wade through the surf and gain it.

"Under Heaven, Marguerite, you have saved my life," breathed Hervé, when he had strength to speak. "I give it to you if you will take it. I cannot live without you. We will go to some distant land, and —"

Stolid Louis was crying. He had quite lost his head.

"Oh, Monsieur le Comte, my good and brave master, I did not know you! I would have left you to die! Yes, Mademoiselle, it is he—I am not mad—it has been himself all the while in disguise as plain Monsieur Hervé. He is nobody but the heir and our chief-tain, Monsieur le Comte du Luc."

Marguerite clasped her hands. All her hopes were gone; she felt as if she could die of the news. But they did not notice her: the boat had to be attended to, if they wished to get safely to shore.

And then Hervé learnt what the upright and innocent Marguerite had done—restored his possessions. And *she* learnt that she was to be his wife, and the true mistress of the Château at last. His wife!—though he did not turn out to be plain M. Hervé, who went to the wars as a common soldier, but Hervé, Comte du Luc.

THE SIX RESOLUTIONS.

THE Rectory was the most comfortable house within the parish of Hipping Mead. The Rector, the Rev. Elam Martyn, was a widower with seven daughters, the eldest six-and-twenty, the youngest fourteen years old—he had been a widower some thirteen years.

The shackles of matrimony had fallen from his rather light nature, without leaving permanent regret. Not that his had been an unhappy married life, but his wife had been—and no detriment to his manliness either—the stronger will of the two. Still he felt the yoke in a quiescent sort of a way, and so when it fell from off him, unknown to himself, unacknowledged in his heart, the relief was sensible.

It came then, that at the age of thirteen, Gerty, his eldest daughter, took upon herself, with premature womanliness, the ordering of the household, and had remained ever since, as her father said, prime minister—a born administrator she was, and her father knew it. Never, from household disorganisation, had the Rector been once tempted, these thirteen years of widowhood, to cast a thought on second wedlock, and the very possibility of such a thing had never entered his daughters' heads.

The sisters lived in affection with each other, and at peace with their neighbours. The village watched over their rector's daughters with vigilant interest, knew their different dispositions and inclinations, and prized them accordingly.

Mothers of young girls intended for service eagerly sought to have them trained by Miss Gerty, whose efficiency in all domestic matters was well known and respected; but if anyone were sick it was Miss Sophie who was in demand.

If, however, sorer trouble than sickness fell on a household—not poverty, but disgrace through some near member, then it was Miss Nelly, her father's pet, who was appealed to. "A sign," said her father with dry humour, "that your own morals are rather lax, my girl." But Nelly argued that this was a disease, and might be cured by medicine, not surgery merely.

Again, if poverty visited a family, Mary the open-handed, soft, pitying Mary, was called to the rescue. That money was needed was all that Mary cared to know, the why and the wherefore were after considerations. Her father laughed, and called her proceedings Irish. "You give bread first," he said, "you weigh it afterwards." "People give a more attentive ear to wisdom," would Mary say, "when fed and clothed: hunger dulls the sense of morality."

But if Hipping Mead had a backward swain or a coquettish damsel, Miss Emmy was the one appealed to. For one short summer, when still in her teens, Emmy lived her little idyll of happy love, but when harvest time had been and gone, her lover was on the wide sea, and had bade her no farewell, so she had ever a plaintive, pleading voice, that brought together often, sundered lovers; a winning smile that had power with a wavering swain. And lastly, when Hipping Mead would be en fête, Gracey was in request. She it was who decked the May Queen, presided at tea feasts, joined heartiest in the rural games, and gave the prizes.

The seventh daughter, Amy, the last of the flock, was an invalid—the tender and special care of each of her loving sisters, and her father also.

It was the first week in October, and Mr. Martyn went to Harrington, a neighbouring parish, to indulge on a friend's acres in some unclerical sport, and to take a Sunday's duty.

As he was to be absent ten days, Gerty inaugurated a house cleaning, her usual "escape" for repressed energies. A week had elapsed since his departure, the actual cleansing process was over, but the things had not been replaced in their respective localities, orderly confusion reigned supreme—even confusion was orderly with Gerty.

The six sisters sat at the breakfast-table. Amy was on the sofa, the meal was just over, and Gerty was opening the post-bag. Its only contents that morning was a letter from the Rector, addressed to "The Miss Martyns." Rather surprised, Gerty, as the eldest, opened the letter. It was short; not half-a-dozen lines—she read it, and as if she could not help it, let it drop.

"Girls," she cried in a faint voice, "papa is married."

For a second or two no one spoke; then Nelly, with a white face, picked up the letter and read it aloud; it was as follows:

"MY DEAR DAUGHTERS,

"This morning I married a widow with six children. She is a good manager, but the children are very unruly. I hope to be home on Saturday night.

"Your loving father,

"ELAM MARTYN."

The consternation at that breakfast-table baffles description. A sob broke from Nelly, it was re-echoed at intervals by her six sisters. They looked at each other blankly, then round the large and cosey room, taking a prospective farewell. Over the sideboard hung a full-length portrait of the late Mrs. Martyn. Gerty's eyes led the way to its contemplation, the six other pairs followed. Gerty exclaimed:

"My poor mother!" In different keys each voice repeated the lament.

"I shall at once go out as a lady-help," said Gerty, taking, as the eldest, the lead in declaring her intentions.

"A lady-help!" echoed her sisters, aghast.

"Yes; I am qualified for nothing higher in the labour mart," she said bitterly. "My education ceased when she," pointing to the deceased Mrs. Martyn, "died. Since then my only studies have been the bodily needs of my family. I shall never sit round at this board."

"Poor Gerty," sighed they all.

"And I," said Sophie, "I shall get Cousin Tom to take me into St. Luke's Hospital as nurse. Luckily for me, like Gerty, my family and the village have trained me well for my vocation; but papa will miss me when he has his gout, I know," and that expectation seemed to bring sudden consolation to Sophie, and gratification to the others.

"Such a nurse as you are!" they all cried. "Oh, it is a shame!"

Then Nelly, her father's favourite, wiping away her tears with an angry gesture, cried:

"Papa used to call me little Mrs. Fry. I think he was just prophesying, for I'll apply to the governor of St. Giles's Prison to be made a female warder. Bill Jones—Burly Bill, you know, has been often there, and he says the female warders are *quite* ladies, and live by themselves."

"Oh, Nelly!" they all exclaimed, "it is such an ugly dress. Your hair's all cut short, and you have to wear big keys at your side."

"I shall at any rate be useful," said Nelly loftily, "and not in *anybody's* way," and she relapsed into tears.

In a soft, deprecatory tone, Emmy took up her burthen.

"It is a world full of pain," she sighed. "Whatever our special vocations may be, man's universal aim seems to be crushing woman's best affections. I shall go as companion to old Miss Triniger, she has often asked me. Papa shall have a quiet fireside."

"Miss Triniger!" they all cried, horrified. "Oh, not Miss Triniger; she never sees a soul, and she is so crabbed, so selfish. Oh, not her, Emmy."

"I am patient," said Emmy, with the air of expectant martyrdom.

With a decidedly more cheerful voice, quavering between a smile and a tear, Mary the governess—the tender-hearted Mary—announced her intentions.

"I shall marry Cousin Tom," she said. "I didn't like to be the first to break our happy circle, but he wanted me to marry him months ago, so I'll do it now."

"Oh, Mary!" they exclaimed, one after the other, "oh, Mary dear, we are so glad." And then they all wept together. In a little time they dried their eyes and looked at Gracey, who had made no sign of delivering her resolution.

"And you, Gracey," they said, "what will you do?"

"Sisters," she replied very quietly, "I shall stay here."

"Here!" they echoed in different keys of astonishment and resentment.

"Yes," she repeated, "here. If papa will not need me, Amy will. You forget Amy."

"Amy," said each in a shamed whisper. And then they all rose together, all but Gracey, and gave the fragile invalid on the sofa a pardon-asking kiss.

"Gracey is right," they said. "One of us must stay and take care of Amy." And they wished in their secret hearts that in their pride and anger, their wounded affections, their self-assertion and impulsive reprisals, they had not forgotten poor little feeble Amy.

Saturday night came, and round the tea-table the six sisters, Amy on the couch as before, awaited the arrival of their father.

The seat at the head of the board was empty, in ominous expectancy. Throughout the house a careless desolation reigned. The furniture deposed for the cleaning had not been reinstated; the two servants moved about like mutes, their voices sepulchral, their demeanour solemnly grave. The tea-table, usually so brightly inviting, was chill and formal-looking; no hot cakes or delicate preserves. Plenty there was, but the plenty of right, not of mindful love. No one spoke. Each watched the clock furtively. Seven struck, and three minutes after, the gravel was scattered against the windows, the bell was rung hastily, the door opened, and unmet, unwelcomed, but certainly not unexpected, Mr. Martyn returned to the bosom of his family. He was alone; his daughters rose simultaneously.

"Well," he cried, his eyes twinkling mischievously, "what has happened, Nelly?" and he looked at his favourite. "No kiss for papa, any of you girls?"

And then he counted them; beginning at Gerty he called each by name, till reaching Amy he cried:

"And Amy's seven. You're all here. And what a state the house is in," looking quizzingly round the room, "everything topsyturvy: been frightened by ghosts?" he laughed. "Why, Peggy only half-opened the door to me, and Dan never opened his lips from the station to the hall door."

"Papa," said Gerty, severely, "why didn't you bring her in?"

"Who in?" and the rector's mouth twitched.

"The new mistress of Hipping Mead," replied Gerty, with a choke in her voice.

"Your wife, sir," said Sophie.

"Poor mamma's successor," sobbed Nelly.

"The strange woman," cried Mary.

"Mrs. Martyn," said Emmy, with convincing simplicity.

"The widow you married, sir," said Gracey reproachfully.

"And the six children," piped poor weak little Amy from the sofa.

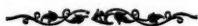
"Good gracious," cried the rector, divesting himself of his outer coat. "A woman with so many individualities knew I never."

Then all in concert demanded :

"Did you not write and tell us that you had married a widow with six children ?"

"Yes," replied the rector, laughing heartily, "yes, and so I did—but to another man."

The only one of the resolutions kept was Mary's. She did marry Cousin Tom, but she always declared she had been frightened into it.



TO HER IMPERIAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF PRUSSIA ON HER MARRIAGE.

"When her joy is at its fullest there shall mingle with her mirth
All sweet and glorious memories of the land that gave her birth ;
In thought she still shall tread the soil whose thousand heroes stand
Round the daughter of our England, the child of the old, old land."

E. L. HERVEY, 1858.

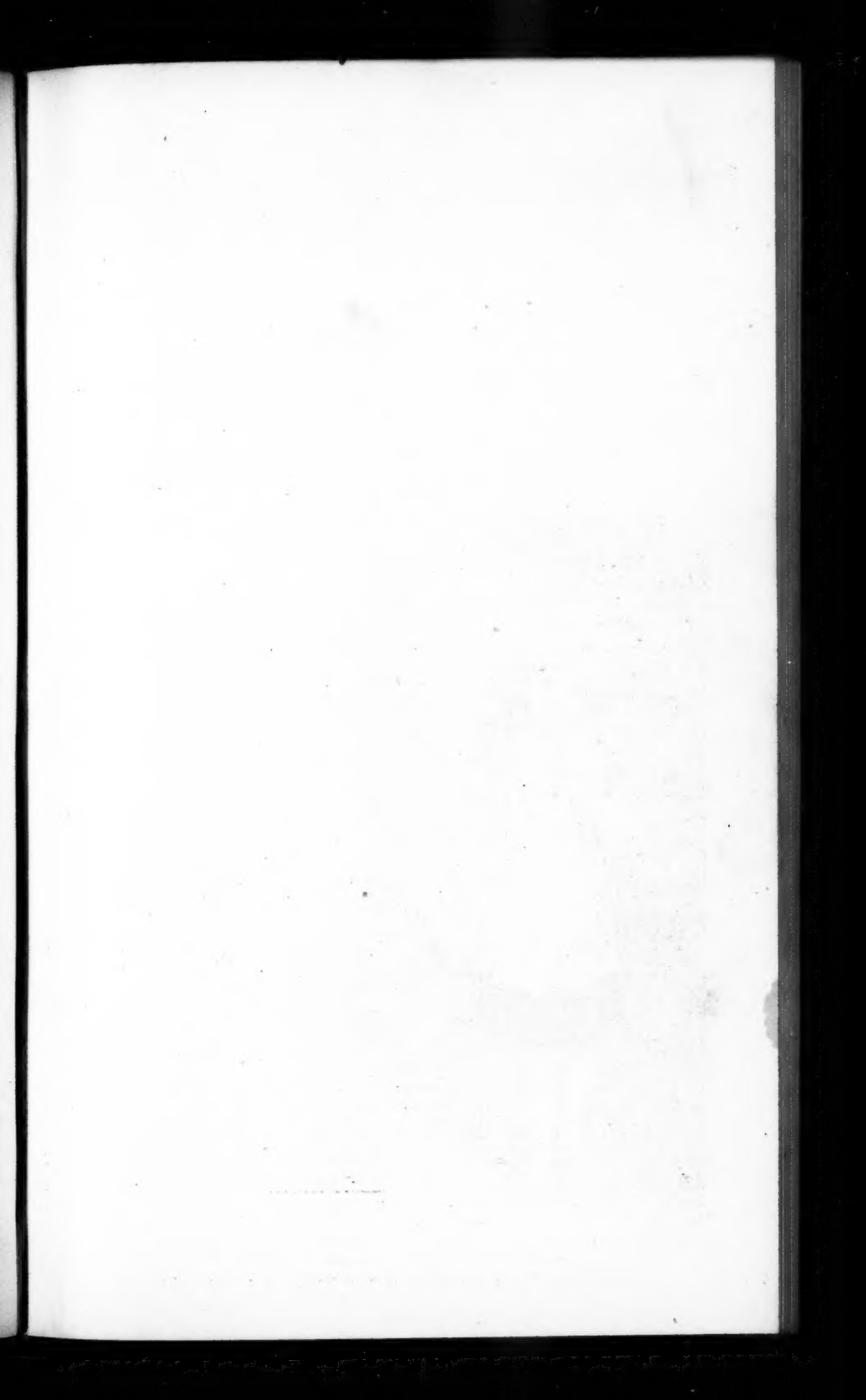
A voice—a voice from the old, old land, its daughter's child to hail,
Fresh op'ning bud of the flower we love on the hill or in the dale,
"May only the sea divide us"—that was the happiest thought,
Of all the true and hearty thoughts in loyal mottoes wrought,
When, twenty years ago, Princess, just twenty years ago,
Gay flags and salutations gleamed through drifting, dazzling snow.

The heart of a mighty nation then was one with the father's heart ;
Conflicting with emotions strong, seeing its child depart.
As step by step, going down with the Bride—down the decorated pier,
The watching eye of the people shone through the sympathising tear.
Proudly the Maids of Kent then stood, as Britain's own right hand
Strewed the last roses on her path, upon her native land.

Full well that Princess knew and felt what the roses were to say
Of blessing, and of fervent prayer to follow her all the way.
On to the distant lovely home, above the Havel bright ;
On through the unknown future, through each unseen day and night ;
On—onward still prayer reaches Heaven, and blessings come through prayer,
Go with us to our journey's end : we learn their value there.

Now let us greet the Royal Bride and Bridegroom of to-day
With fullest and with warmest wish our English tongue can say.
May their future be as happy as her parents' life has been,
A wedded life of faithful love through every changing scene ;
While storms of war and wild distress raged through a night of sorrow,
While sunbeams struggled through the clouds upon the glorious morrow !

E. H. HUDSON.





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